COMPUTER GAMES STRATEGY PLUS

IBM PC, Mac, Amiga and CD ROM

Issue 22 September 1992
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CASTLES II
Complete Preview

CES REPORT
All the new games

PLUS:
John Madden II, Great Naval Battles, Grand Prix Unlimited, Gateway, Theatre of War, Star Trek: The Next Generation

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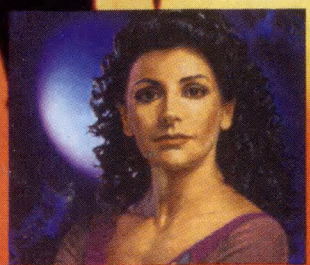

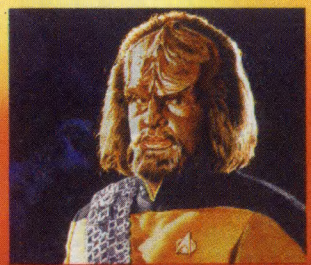

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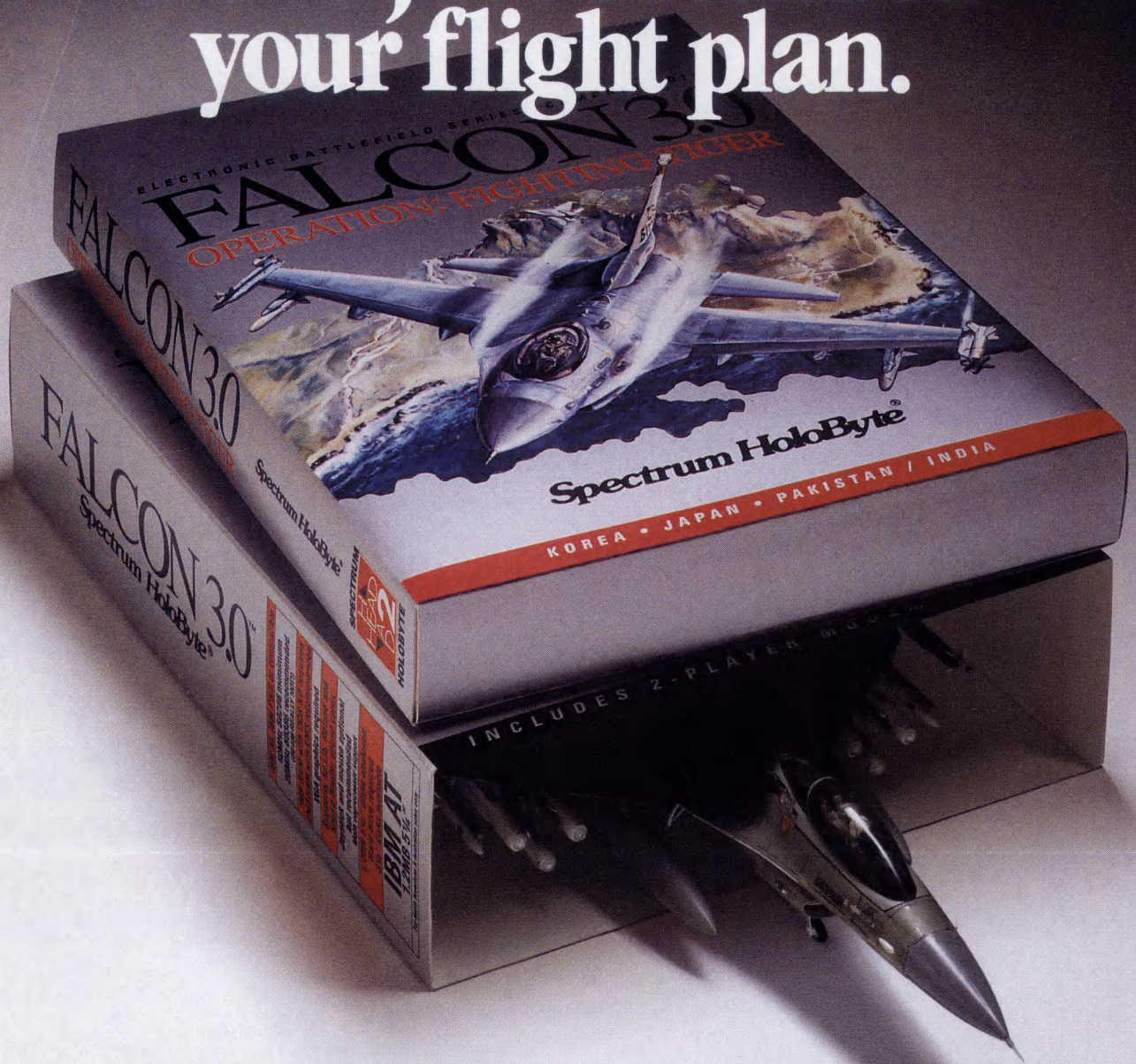

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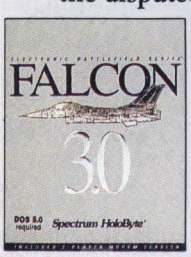

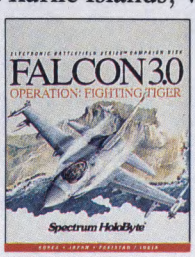

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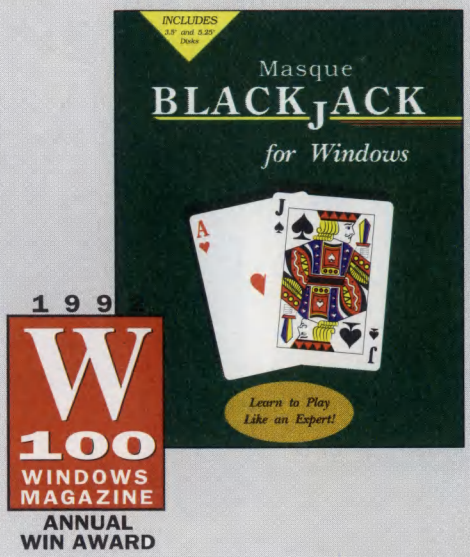

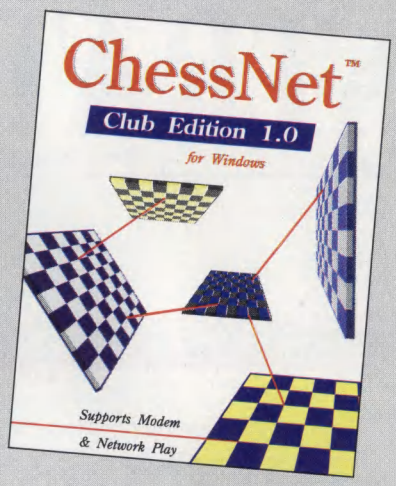

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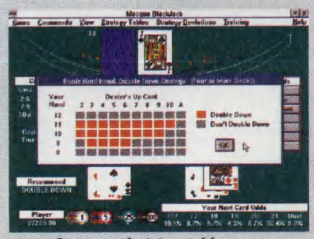

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COMPUTER GAMES
STRATEGY PLUS

Number 22
September 1992

Star Trek: talking 'bout the Next Generation

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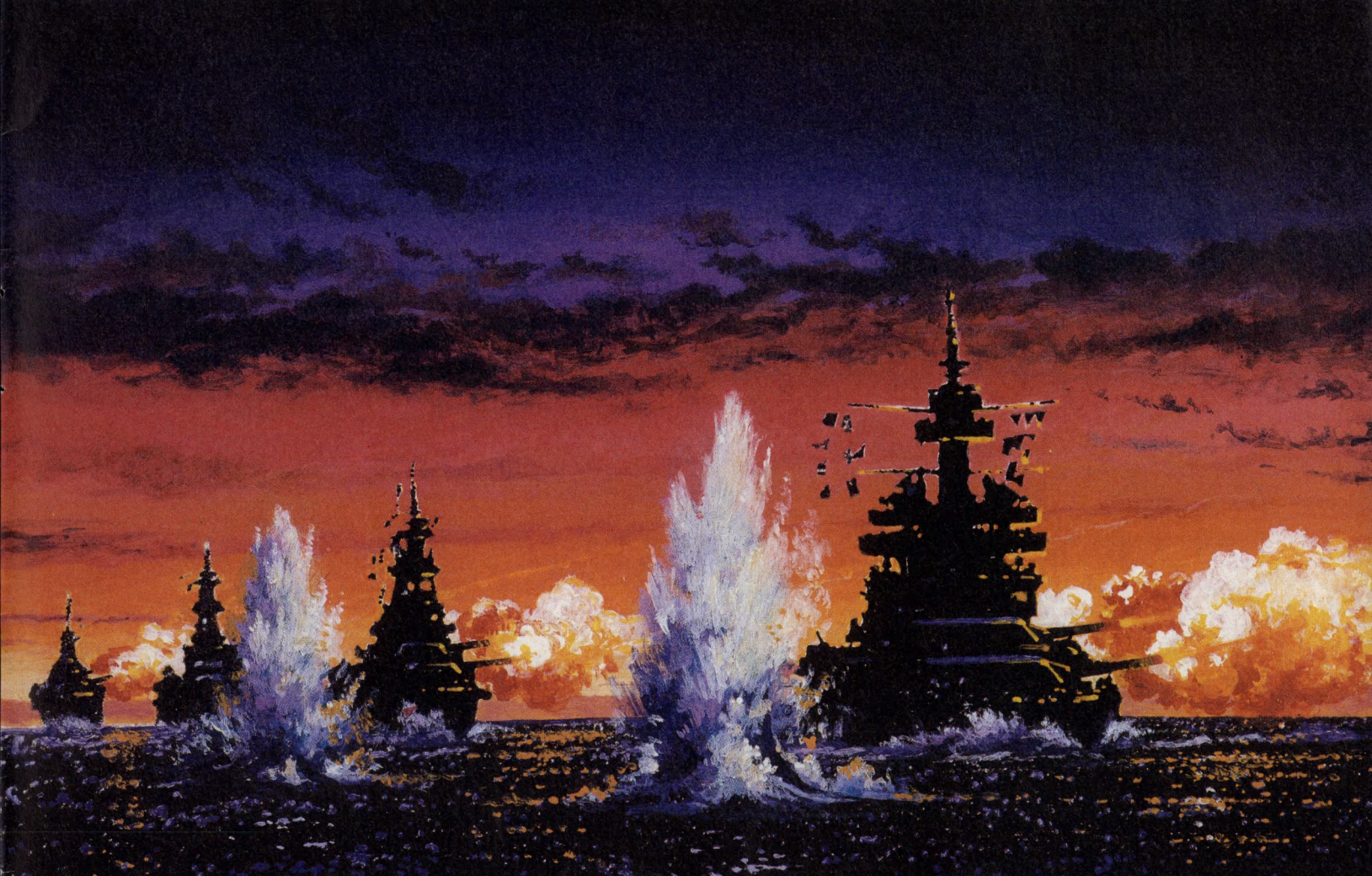
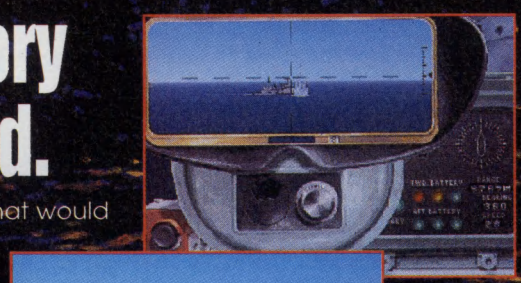


A legendary year in the history of naval conflict has returned.



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Bigger and better

In the light of the recent CES, it's worth taking a look at where games are going, and where software houses think they are going. After the CES report that appears in this issue, I would hope that readers feel equally equipped to draw some conclusions.

If there was a discernible pattern at the show, it was that games are not just getting bigger; they are getting better. Much of this improvement can be traced to the 386 PC becoming a standard for the MS DOS platform. The increased RAM and clock speed means that companies can now think seriously about Super VGA. Access have already taken the plunge with **Links 386 Pro,** and now Three Sixty have hit the trail with **Theatre of War** and **Patriot**. For many gamers, this will mean another irritating (and in some cases, expensive) upgrade. Full marks then to Three Sixty for their plan to offer a SVGA upgrade coupon with their forthcoming Battlesets. At the time of writing, the precise details are unconfirmed, but even if the entire plan collapses their heart was in the right place.

There is a tendency in the software business to look for change for its own sake. This stems partly from paranoia about being last year's thing - a touch of the 8-bit blues. This feeling seems largely to have been expunged this year with companies consolidating rather than going for the 'next big thing'. The most frantic area of change is, of course, the cartridge market. This is hardly surprising as it has managed to become monstrous solely on the strength of recycled arcade games that one would be embarrassed to play even on an Atari. This could all change when the CD drives become available for the Genny and the Ninny. The dominance of the IBM PC as the key platform for strategy and role playing games could be seriously threatened. At the moment, it is a chicken and egg situation: Sega say that they are 'postponing' the release of their CD ROM drive until there are games available that 'make use of its capabilities'. As someone who considers he has a keen ear for marketing speak, this statement definitely triggered an alarm, but it still made sense. Why release a machine which could create a radically different platform when there's only a load of old rubbish to play on it?

The PC based software houses, for their part, are too busy joining the gold rush and shovelling their existing games over to existing cartridge platforms to worry about developing original programs for the consoles. And where's the harm in that? If games like **Railroad Tycoon** can be introduced to a generation hitherto thought of as brain dead, then so much the better.

Vapor Trail

As is traditional after a CES, it's time for our Vaporware chart. Is it dead? Is it alive? Tune in here to find out.

		Last position
1)	**AdLib Gold Card** (AdLib RIP)	*
2)	**Conspiracy** (Accolade)	2
2)	**Suez '73** (RAW)	*
3)	**Joe Montana II** (Sega)	*
4)	**Planetside** (Psygnosis)	*
5)	**Struggle for Guadalcanal** (RAW)	*
6)	**Harpoon for Windows** (Three Sixty)	*
7)	**Napoleon's Battles** (Strategic Plus Soft)	*
8)	**Graham Gooch Cricket** (Audiogenic)	^
9)	**Supremacy** (Supremacy Games)	*
10)	**Rollerbabes** (???)	*

* new entry
^ bullet

Bubbling under: **Space Inc** (RAW); **Overlord** (SSG); **Champions** (Konami)

Lots of new entries this month with the deceased AdLib's Gold Card topping the lot. In with a bullet at #8 is **Graham Gooch Cricket**. This must be a big disappointment to the millions of Americans so looking forward to the game.

Block heads

This month sees the start of a new feature: Block Busters. I hope this will represent a sanctuary for all those suffering from adventurer's block. We'll do our best to cover as many games as possible in this section; but to facilitate this, we may have to reduce the type size somewhat. Cruel, isn't it. You go there with brainache and come away with eye strain. ❑

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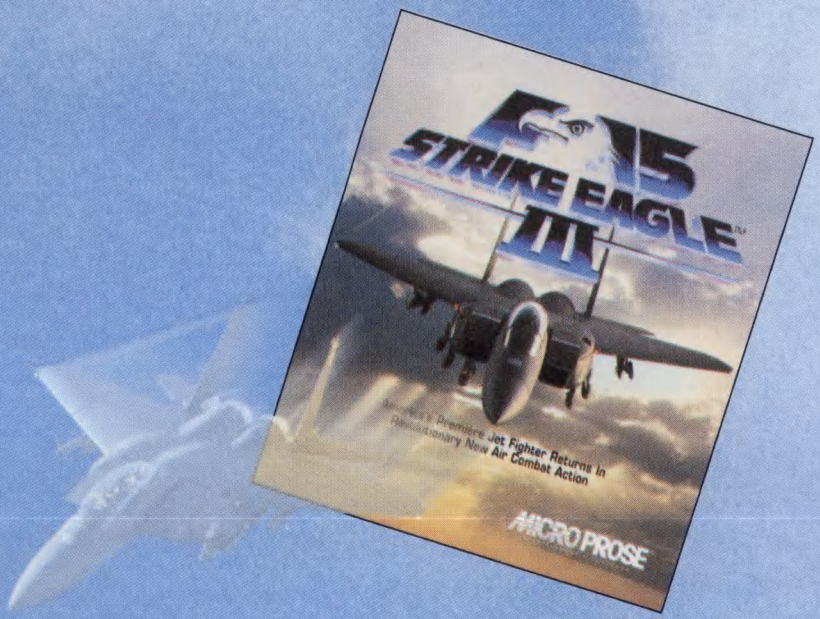
All right. So maybe there is one flight simulator more thrilling than F-15 Strike Eagle® II.



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SUMMER CES CHICAGO

Consumer Electronics Show
Chicago, Illinois
May 28 - 31 1992
By Brian Walker

A public affair

'What a disaster' opined the CEO of one software house, as he surveyed the madding and to him, maddening crowd that poured through the doors of the first 'open' CES. His ire was not directed at Joe and Jane Public, indeed there was a unanimous feeling that the behavior of the 'guests' was impeccable. It's just that this is not what the software industry is about. It certainly isn't what journalism is about either, as weary hacks had to dash backwards and forwards between the main event at McCormick Place and the downtown suites where many companies had taken refuge. These journeys took their toll, not least on the nerves, as cab drivers sought to compensate for the permanent dug-up state of Chicago's streets by handing out Nigel Mansell impersonations. But in a '74 Chevy???

In the end it meant cramming four days work into two because on the third day many software houses adopted a new commandment: 'thou shalt give up and go home'. Some stayed. But not enough.

As to the games...the feeling amongst journalists prior to the show was that there would be little new on offer. Extended development times being what they are, we have all got used to seeing games four times around, either that or last years rave being completely vaporized from the company schedule altogether ('But what's happened to Texas Tom and the Cannibals of Xanadu?' 'Er, that didn't quite work out as we'd hoped'). But of course there were *some* new games being shown...

ORIGIN

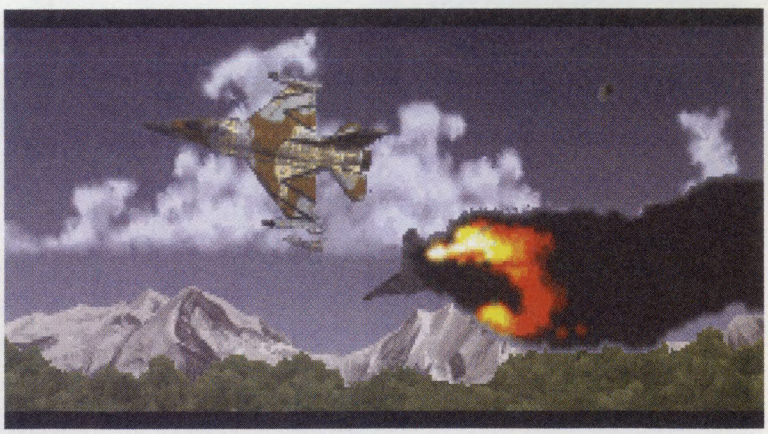
Like many companies now, Origin's releases come in bursts. Nothing for eons then all of a sudden, *sur-prise!* Out pops **Ultima VII** and **Ultima Underworld**. Far from being premature, these big buns had been in the oven for quite some time. The next happy couplet should be the add-on disk for **Ultima VII: The Serpents Isle**, plus **Strike Commander**. That's right, **Strike Commander**, star of one of our prettiest layouts and a 'comprehensive' preview a mere twelve issues ago. So what's been the problem? It seems that designer Chris Roberts was profoundly dissatisfied with not one, but two of the engines that had been built to house Strike Commander Fusspot. A third was eventually found to be worthy to carry the name. The rest should be history. Soon.

Commander this, and Commander that, whatever next? Why, **Trade Commander,** of course! This is a progression of the engine developed for **Wing Commander II** and also includes many of the advances that will be seen in **Strike Commander**. The most striking innovation being that of the interface. Cinematic sequences are now combined with the original **WC** point and click method of moving from scene to scene and initiating conversations. A feeling of 'being in the movie' is created, moreso as the player has complete control over the character's actions (via icons). On the face of it the plot sounds like Han Solo joins the Confederation. It's all getting a bit crowded, not to say familiar in the galaxy, but doubtless technology will win out. System requirements? A Cray with a 10 gigabyte hard drive and a Cinemascope monitor. No seriously, folks, Origin say the game will run on a 386 SX.

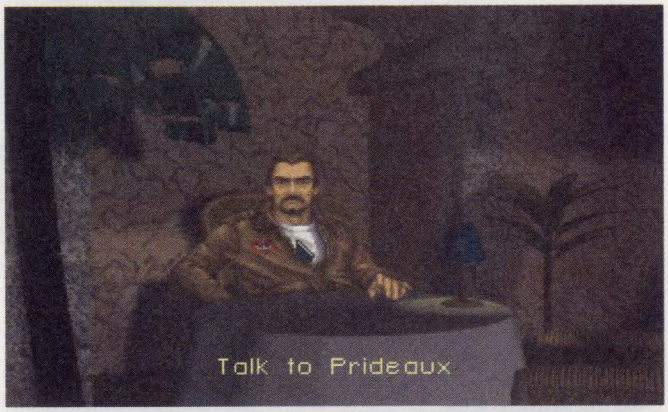
So what's new, pussycat? Not the Kilrathi for sure. They're still purring away and in fact are heavily featured in **Special Operations 2**, the final chapter in **Wing Commander II**. The story concerns the escape of the traitor Jazz Colson. Bluehair, the player character, must track him and the other traitors down. Maniac makes a comeback while another addition is a Mission Selector program which allows a re-flight of any sortie in the **Wing Commander II** series.

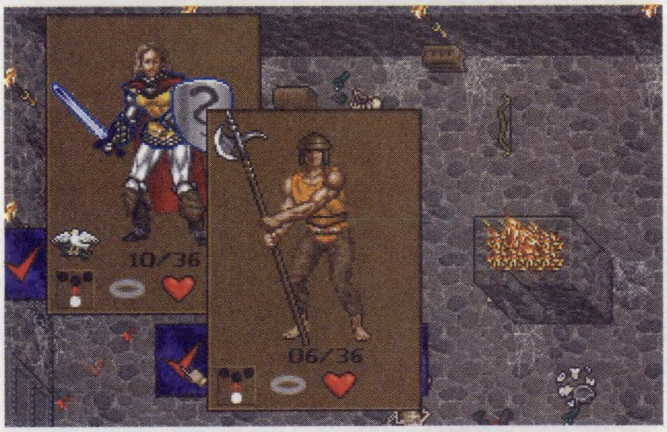
Cruel Britannia

Origin have come up with a neat twist to the add-on disk: the 'add-*in*' disk. **Forge of Virtue** can be loaded into **Ultima VII** and then accessed at *any point in the game*. The disk contains three new quests, successful completion of which can result in maximum attributes for their character and a powerful new weapon. Or a painful lingering death. Of course there are those clever dicks like our own Doug Jacoby who played through **Ultima VII** three times in ten minutes, but for most of us such games can be an uphill struggle. And then, just when you thought you'd cracked it along comes **Ultima VII: The Serpents Isle**. As it would make no sense starting before **The Black Gate**, the designer, sagely Old Lord British himself, decided to start up where that story left off. A newly discovered region of Britannia



Strike Commander
(opposite and below)
Ultima VII: The Serpents Isle
(below center)





is the setting. This will include new terrain features such as ice! snow! frozen wastes! *(aren't these all the same? - terrain Ed)*. Plus there will now be larger close-ups of every character encountered, *and* a detailed full length view of the player character wearing the armor personally chosen.

But why, oh why, should players want to spend what's left of their lives playing **The Serpents Isle**? Come in producer Warren Spector: 'You're right. In fact we rejected several plot proposals because they lacked the sort of philosophical underpinnings you're talking about. I originally proposed something with an ecological theme - you know, living in harmony with nature - but the design team came up with the notion of balance, the need to live a life that is balanced in all ways. Hard to say whether the plot grew out of that idea or whether the plot led to the philosophy, but in either case it's definitely there'. Phew! That's a relief, Warren.

But let's talk about technology for a few days. Will **The Serpents Isle** offer anything, anything at all just a teensy weensy bit new in the way of technology? 'Lots of new features have been added. **The Serpent Isle** coders have done things with the base technology that the people who wrote the original game said couldn't be done'. Sounds like they were telling you porky pies, Warren. 'The first major change players will notice is in inventory control.' *Inventory control???* 'When you want to ready a sword, for example, you'll pull up a detailed, full body view of your character and actually put the sword in his hand. And if it's a two handed sword the character will grab it with both hands'. That's the ticket, Warren. Is there anything else you would like to say about **The Serpents Isle**? 'I always have something else to say'. Er, thanks, Warren, that will be all for now. At least until **The Serpents Isle** hits the streets, for this promises to be if not one of the biggest, then at least one of the most consistent software worlds. And by the way, there will be an **Ultima Underworld II**. Just don't ask when. (Reader: 'When?'. Ed: how would you like to spend the rest of your life in a room with only **Pac Man** and Dan Quayle for company?').

All of the aforementioned games, with the exception of **Trade Commander** and **Pac Man**, are scheduled for release in the fourth quarter of this year. ❑

Eric the Unready: 'That'll teach you to marry by proxy'

LEGEND

It's fair to say that the name 'Eric' doesn't figure too prominently in the Hallowed Hall of Heroes. Nowhere will you find 'Eric the Great' or 'Eric the Conqueror'. It's almost as if the very name bestows upon its owner a giant inferiority complex.

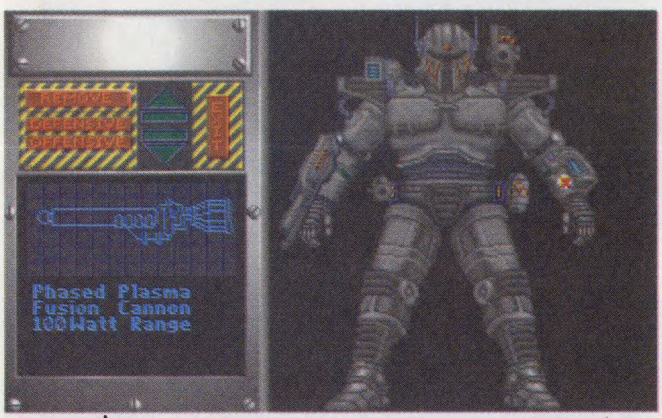
Recently, however, the Erics of this world have been having a slightly better time of it. Last year there was the movie *Eric the Viking* (well it's a start), and now comes **Eric the Unready** from Legend Entertainment. This is the improbable story of Eric the Knight and his quest to rescue the beautiful Princess Lorealle from the clutches of the evil Queen and her lover. All this takes place in the donut shaped world of Torus where dwarves, dragons, and unicorns coexist in rampant disharmony.

Nothing new there, you rightly say, but the story lampoons everything and everybody during its unfolding, including TV, movies, and other adventure games.

From Eric to Ernie, the would-be hero of Legend's **Spellcasting** series. In **301** Ernie travels to Ft Naughtytail (in Floridyo?) with his fraternity pals in what is described as a 'high energy seaside romp complete with gorgeous babes, wet T-shirt contests, mud wrestling and body surfing.' All at the same time? ❑

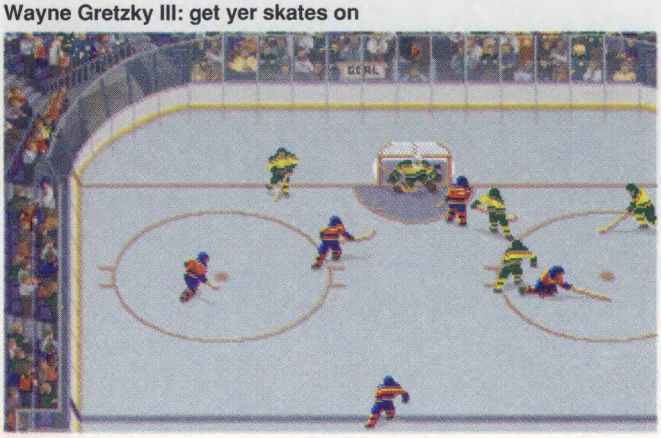
SUMMER CES CHICAGO

Spellcasting 301: 'Mud wrestling anyone?'



Terminator 2029: the Redskins unveil their new linebacker

Wayne Gretzky III: get yer skates on



BETHESDA

Despite all the flash, graphics and general cacophony that accompany most football games now being produced, the favorite game on the subject at *chez Strategy Plus* is still **Gridiron** from Bethesda Softworks. This is despite the sight of 'colored dishmops' (as our writer John Harrington once put it) prancing around the screen. Expect a large gap between issues, therefore, when Bethesda release **Gridiron II**. This is some way off, but there's no harm in dreaming.

I've always thought Arnie, in his on-screen persona as The Terminator, would a make a great linebacker. Just think how his infamous quip would go down in the huddle. Perhaps Bethesda can find a place for him in their game, after all they've found one for him (or rather a clone thereof) in **Terminator 2029**: **Cybergen**. This is a great looking 'shooter' of the type not normally covered by this magazine.

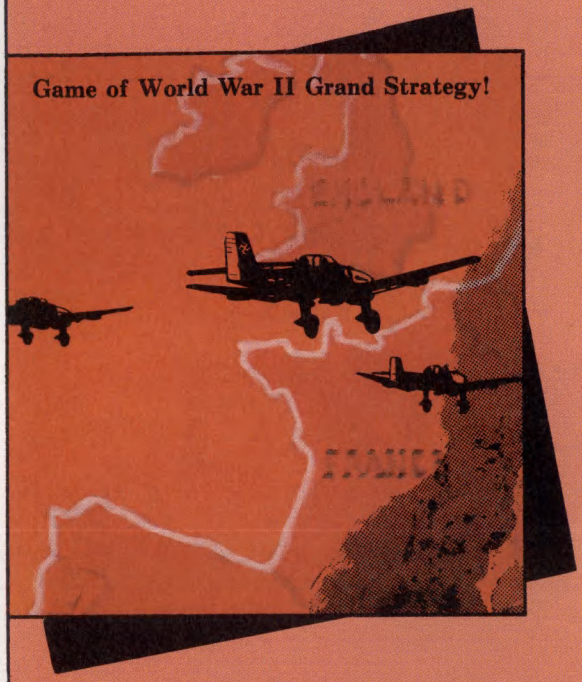
Ice hockey sometimes looks as though it's played exclusively by 'Arnies'. But skating legend Wayne Gretzky is something of an exception in this respect. Wayne was also fortunate enough to have not one game, but two games named after him, neither of which diminished his stature one iota.

And very shortly lucky old Wayne will have a third to his credit. **Wayne Gretzky III** takes on board all the suggestions from armchair coaches and then some. The most obvious addition is that of a three quarter view (as seen in EA's **NHL** for the Sega). My feeling was that this was a significant improvement over the 'mobile mice' present in the top-down view. The boys at Bethesda surprisingly disagreed, arguing that control in the top-down view was much easier. The overall gameplay remains as strong as ever, plus there are new frills like improved sound and more video digitizing.

Wayne Gretzky III will be compatible with the **Hockey League Simulator**, but there will soon be a **Hockey League Simulator II**. This will have a completely redesigned graphic interface and an all new menu system in full color. Other new features include: preseason player negotiations, and an 'injury prone' option that allows players to customize the level and impact of injuries to players during the season. Expect to see all these games in October. ❑

Flown your umpteenth fighter plane? Shot up your 50,000th enemy tank? Challenge your mind instead of your reflexes...play

COMPUTER THIRD REICH®



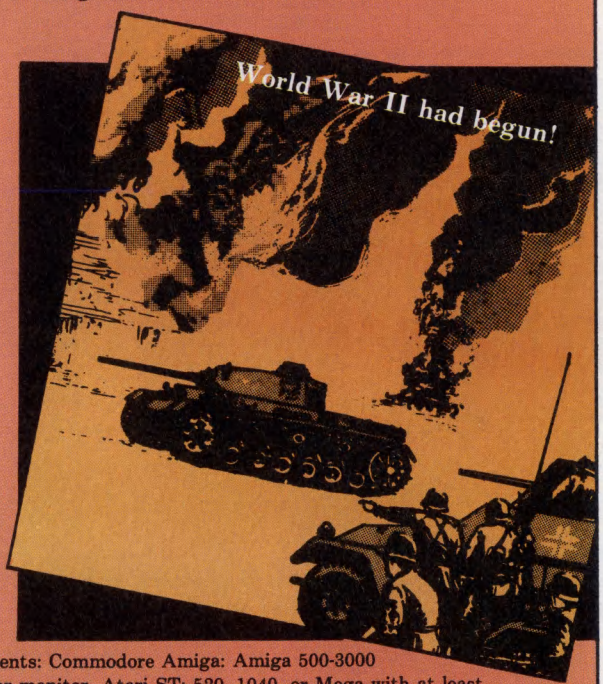
World War II, the conquest of Europe...

Out of the ashes and turmoil of post-World War I Europe an Austrian artist rose from obscurity to command the greatest military machine ever known to man. His name was Adolph Hitler. He and his band of Nazi cutthroats promised a starving German people revenge for the injustices of World War I and a Reich that would last for a thousand years.

Gaining absolute power in 1934, Hitler embarked upon the return of Germany to her previous place of prominence with massive rearmament programs. First Austria, then Czechoslovakia fell under the Nazi boot.

The west viewed the German rise to power with growing alarm, and when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, Britain and France declared war.

The stage was set for a war of such magnitude that it could only be compared to the greatest of natural disasters.



Computer Wargaming like you've never seen it!

It's more than a game, *it is the definitive historical simulation of Europe during World War II.* All the elements: *military, economic, geographical, ideological* and *chronological* are included in the game. Until now, **Third Reich** has been a game for the truly dedicated boardgamer. Recent advances in electronics now make it possible to put all of the rich detail of the boardgame into your home computer.

COMPUTER THIRD REICH includes the following:

- State of the art graphics.
- Easy to use interface.
- Choice of human or computer opponents for either side.
- Three historical scenarios plus the campaign game.
- Advanced SAVE GAME function to make play-by-mail easier.

COMPUTER THIRD REICH system requirements: Commodore Amiga: Amiga 500-3000 (including 1000) with one meg of RAM and color monitor. Atari ST: 520, 1040, or Mega with at least 512K RAM, double side disk drive and color monitor. (Single-side version for 520 available upon request.) See what all this excitement is all about.

Computer Third Reich is available for $39.95. Please add $6.00 shipping and handling (Canadian orders $12.00; overseas $18.00). IBM PC/PS and compatibles version is coming soon.

Get **Computer Third Reich** wherever great computer games are sold, or direct from:

Strategy Magazine had this to say: "The point and click interface is a pleasure to use...The map graphics themselves are excellent...At first I thought this new version would be too simple for the Third Reich player and too complex for the newcomer. Six hours' play changed this viewpoint."

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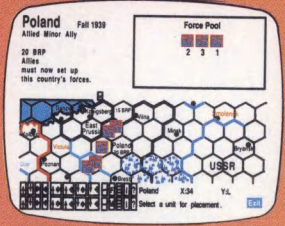


SUMMER CES CHICAGO

MAXIS

First prize for the wackiest range at the show must go to Maxis. Having 'simulated' not just the city and the entire planet, taking in ants along the way, this strange company now tackle life itself with one of their self styled 'software toys', **Sim Life**, sub titled The Genetic Playground.

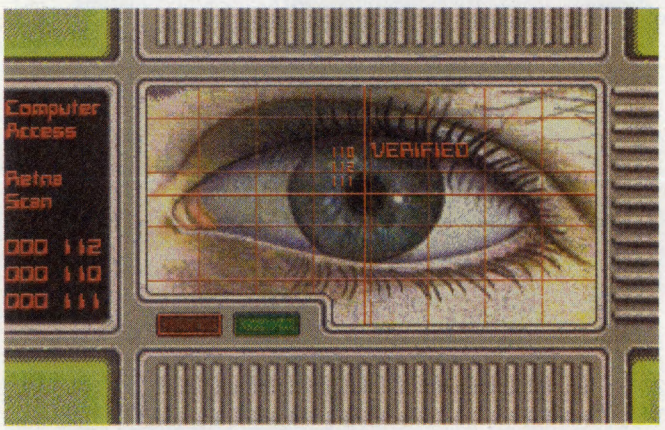
By designing plants and animals right at the genetic level, the player can influence how they look, act, and eventually evolve. Their adaptive abilities may be tested by turning their environment into a paradise (they live!), or a wasteland (they die!). The program permits experimentation with extinction, mutation, disease, and natural disasters to see how they affect the balance of one's ecosystem.

The graphics are excellent and overall **Sim Life** looks to have got the balance exactly right between the fun of **Sim City** and the academia of the worthy, but somewhat stodgy, **Sim Earth**.

But what about **El Fish**? Not even *Sim* El Fish. Just **El Fish**. And no chips! Perhaps they eschew this marine delicacy in Moscow, for this is where the game was developed by Vladimir Pokhilko and Alexey Pajitnov (creator of **Tetris**). This program, I kid you not, allows players to create 'electronic aquariums' replete with 3D fish. Each of these 'electric fish' have a genetic code that controls how it appears and behaves. Players can even design their own fish by cross breeding existing fish! But it's no good dumping one's newly built shark into the local pond. No, comrade, it must be put into the right lake otherwise it will be gobbled up by even *bigger* fish! (there are some very big fish in this game). This is another of those software toys where the player is invited to play with ecosystems and dodgy allegories.

Both these games will be available this summer for big Macs. PC version to follow in the fall. Meanwhile, **Robosport for Windows** and for the Amiga should be available now. Both will be modem compatible with each other and with the original Mac version. ❑

El Fish: but where's the chips?



Mantis: Eye Witness news takes on a new meaning

READYSOFT

Are you ready to enter Cyberspace?' ask Readysoft (aka Empire Strategy), only eight years after William Gibson posed the same question in his seminal book on the genre, *Neuromancer*. Readysoft's enquiry is not unrelated to their forthcoming game on the subject entitled, why, **Cyberspace**! This is a license of the excellent pen and paper game produced by Iron Crown Enterprises.

But onward from such ancient memories to the streets of San Francisco where 'megacorporation repression collides with scrawl street warfare.' Wow! And 'muscle grafted punks and jacked in netheads crawl from the gutter to scrap media stars and cybernetic mercenaries'. Blimey! But don't worry, because 'player development systems help you create cybernetic enhancements and computer implants'.

But what it all boils down to is this: punks roaming the networks using high tech kit to blow dudes and jocks into the next century. The look of the game will aim for that achieved in *Blade Runner*, but will probably turn out looking more like 'Carry on Hacking'. Whoops, what I meant to say was the graphics will be in glowing 256 color and use a combination of vector graphics combined with 3D bitmaps.

Readysoft's next release, however, will be **Campaign**, a World War II game based on the D Day landings. This should appeal to strategy fans

Sim Life: all go in the genetic playground

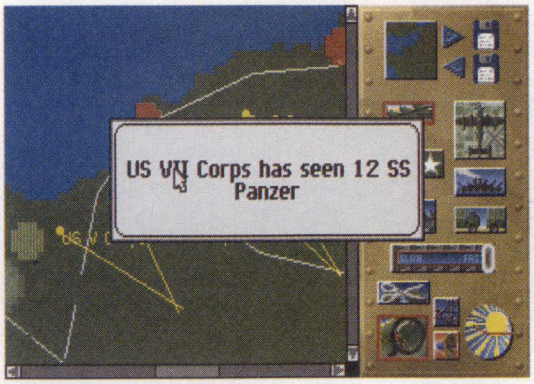
rather than the nuts and bolts brigade, as the action has been abstracted. The vehicles are historically accurate but the combat system owes little to that seen in more conventional wargames. When enemy units are engaged the player may take direct control of the vehicle. Logistics, in the form of supply, play a big part in the game especially the capture of factories. There are some fourteen scenarios in all, each with varying victory conditions. Look out for this one in September.

Rock the joint

The release of **Pacific Islands: Team Yankee 2** 'slipped', to use industry jargon. Nothing new there you say, but in this case the reasons for the delay are quite interesting. The game was 'signed off' by the programming team who then signed off themselves and departed to various points of the globe in celebration. Readysoft supremo Ian 'Iggy' Higgins was pleased as punch, until that is, he booted up the game.

It seemed that the lads had begun their celebrations somewhat prematurely, for the intro music consisted of an off-key rub-a-dub reggae rhythm not entirely in keeping with the game's subject matter. Iggy went from a whiter shade of pale to deep purple, as he came to the conclusion that the team must have been sampling some of the more exotic products of the eponymous islands while penning their 'composition'.

Unfortunately he had no option but to await their return, upon which the *roots mon* soundtrack was replaced by something more appropriate. My suggestion that he should market the original version as a collectors item was not immediately regarded as a stroke of genius.



Campaign: Readysoft show the Dunkirk spirit

Team Yankee 2 is now on release and is published in the US by Readysoft from a giant trading estate somewhere in Canada. **Cyberspace** is expected around Christmas time, but will probably arrive next summer. ❑

PARAGON'S VIRTUES

Paragon could be one of the little fish described in the aforementioned **El Fish**, for they have been swallowed up by a bigger (but friendly) fish in the shape of Microprose. This seems to have had little immediate effect for there they were, pleasant as ever, with two smart looking games in tow and another on the horizon. **'Challenge of the Five Realms'** was the subject of a brief preview in our last issue and, like many of Paragon's forthcoming games, will appear on the CD ROM platform by the of the year. This will support digitized speech throughout the cinematic sequences.

Travelling on in time we meet up with **Megatraveller III: The Unknown Worlds**. This will contain a trilogy of game scenarios each, according to Paragon, with a 'limitless number of plot possibilities'. In addition to this, worlds will be randomly generated for each player. The scenarios themselves promise to be very distinct: a rescue adventure; an ancient mystery; and a quest for revenge. The interface has undergone considerable enhancements such as only usable options being highlighted. Also, buildings and NPC's will be color coded to lead players in the right direction. As if that isn't enough, Paragon will be releasing a follow-up supplement with three new scenarios.

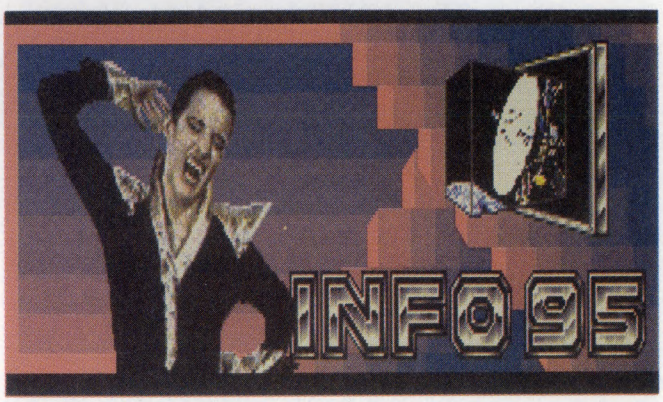
When Harry ate Sally

In the winter CES report on **Mantis,** readers thrilled to the sight of a newscaster who was just about to become the *entree* for an alien thing. Soon, the entire meal will be available for viewing. Indeed **Mantis** should be available as you read this.

The story of **Mantis** goes something like this: Earth had no warning! (but then Earth never does). Out of nowhere insects from another world attack the planet earth using advanced space weapons. Three billion people died, solving the over population problem at a stroke. The ones who died were the lucky ones, for the remaining souls find themselves giving birth to alien offsprings. The user is mercifully spared the precise details of conception.

All of this is an excuse to fly around exterminating insects in the craft known as the **Mantis**. This comes *loaded!* Mass Driver cannons, shock proof electro luminescent HUD Quad Jump Drives, and a sophisticated navigational system, are just some of the extras you won't find on a Subaru. Graphics are truly state-of-the-art, while the game contains over 100 different interlaced missions and 6 megabytes of digitized speech. In addition Paragon are to release a speech accessory pack.

Mantis and **Challenge of the Five Realms** should be available as you read this. **Megatraveller III** is expected in November. ❑

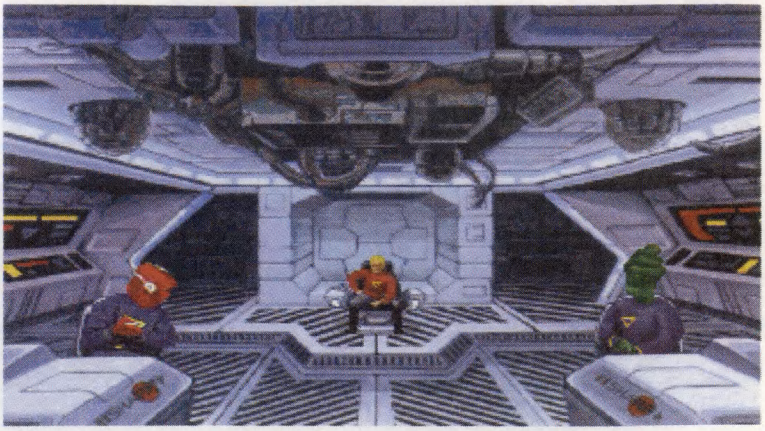


Mantis: 'Hi, my name's...'

SUMMER CES CHICAGO

SIERRA

Sierra seem to be not so much tilting towards, but falling over backwards into the educational market. The fun stuff hasn't been entirely forgotten, though. The **Laura Bow** mystery should be available now, and three new games are planned for the pre-Christmas period:

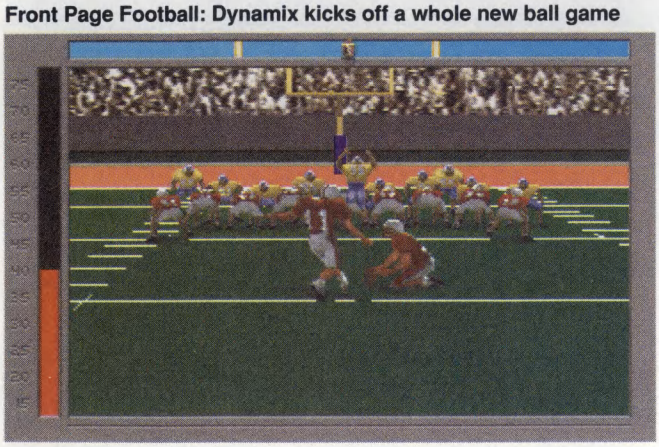


Space Quest V: Roger Wilco checks out some intergalactic hairstyles

King's Quest VI: Ken and Roberta prepare to address a staff meeting

Quest for Glory III: what lions do when they aren't sleeping

Front Page Football: Dynamix kicks off a whole new ball game



King's Quest VI: Heir today, Gone Tomorrow; **Space Quest V: Roger Wilco in the Next Mutation**; and **Quest for Glory III: The Wages of War**.

The **King's Quest** tale sees the return of Prince Alexander who is lusting, whoops, I mean longing for Cassima. Sierra say this will be the biggest game in the series yet, with up to 40% of the game being 'optional'. This would suggest that it promises to halt the decline into simplicity that the series has been undergoing recently.

Quest For Glory III ventures into the jungle and to the kingdom of Tarna, home of the Liontaur people, who are at war with the Simbani tribe. The player's task is to stop this nonsense and save Tarna from an ancient evil. Characters from the previous game in the series may be transferred over.

An intergalactic dustman is on the loose, cheerfully dumping bio-hazardous waste over any planet within spitting distance, but Roger Wilco is on his tail and the Hologram Woman is on his.

It all sounds a bit saucy as Roger makes the unlikely transition from custodian to Casanova in **Space Quest V: Roger Wilco in the Next Mutation**.

Sierra's sister company Dynamix will also be making a substantial contribution as they look to build on the technology and reputation derived from their '**Aces**' flight sim series. The first beneficiary of this diversification should be **Front Page Sports: Football**, itself the commencement of a series. This is a management/arcade game with either being optional. Dynamix say the game will offer 'something for everyone, from the beginner to the advanced player'. The play editor allows custom designs and comes with 200 plays on board. Players can choose to be the quarterback, coach, or general manager. Or they may opt to get down with the grunts by controlling an individual player whereupon plays may be changed by calling audibles.

Another scoop for Dynamix is the CRPG **Betrayal at Krondor**, the first in a planned series based upon Raymond E Feist's *Riftwar Legacy*, and which is being developed for Dynamix by ex Cinemaware star John Cutter.

But back to the war torn skies. Next on the runway is likely to be the **Red Baron Mission Builder**: new scenarios, new planes, and new 'aces'. This will probably be followed by **Aces Over Europe**. In response to many requests, this will be the first game in the series to come with modem support. Aircraft include the P51 Mustang; Focke-Wolfe 1090's; Messerschmitt 190's, plus tons more. Get ready to knock out trains, tanks, and *sauerkraut* plants.

Later on in the year expect to see **WWII:1946!**: what if Truman had decided against dropping the bomb? Would we all be taking pictures of one another eating *sushi* now? This is the hypothetical scenario (well, not quite) that this expansion disk posits, and that is intended for use with **Aces of the Pacific**. New aircraft also enter the fray of WWII, making the dogfights that much more savage.

Another expansion disk for the Pacific theatre is **RAF in the Pacific**, What ho! As the title suggests, the Brits get invited to join the fun and are soon bewildering the Japanese with their strange accents and moustaches: 'Take that you Rising Sun rotter'. ❑

IN THE YEAR 2001, THE WAR ON DRUGS HAS REACHED TERRIFYING NEW HIGHS.

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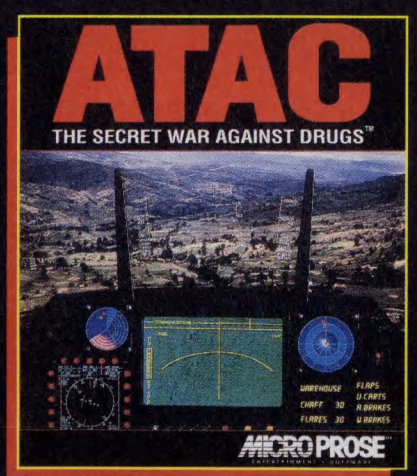

Actual screens may vary.

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SUMMER CES CHICAGO

QQP

Following the success of **The Perfect General** and **The Lost Admiral**, QQP surprised everyone by bringing out **Solitaires Journey**. This was akin to Tammy Wynette releasing a rap record! Their next game promises to be a return to more normal territory, to **Conquered Kingdoms** in fact. This is set firmly in fantasy/strategy genre and looks set to combine the best of both their aforementioned 'war' games. The combat system is closer to **The Lost Admiral** while the graphics, though radically different, will have the same detail as seen in **The Perfect General**.

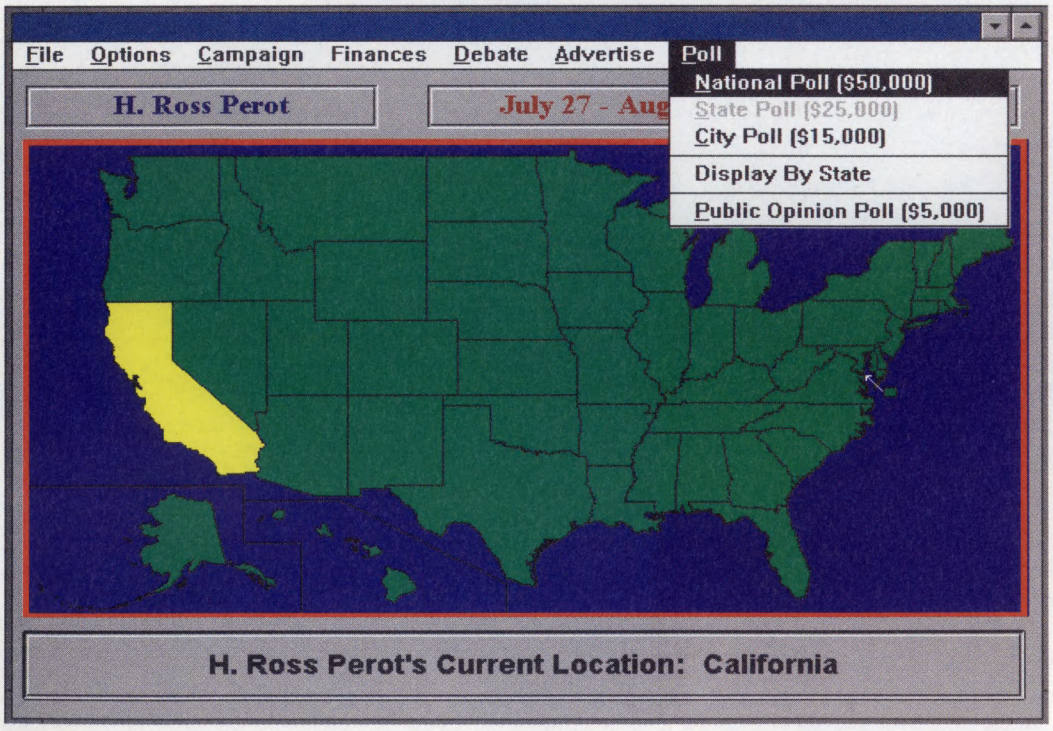
The set-up will be semi random, that is the player will be able to choose three starting configurations from six.

There will be eight different units consisting of creatures like gargoyles, trolls, and even humans! These may be bought from the points allocated at the start of the game.

The game length can be set to short, medium, or long. In turns these represent 12, 36, and 60, respectively. Castles can be placed under siege, though at the start of the game they are up for grabs. The object is the taking of territory in a land where feudalism rules. **Conquered Kingdoms** will have a modem option and the comprehensive stats database that one has come to associate with QQP.

Some way down the road is **The Perfect General DeLuxe**. This will have a new artificial intelligence, new units and weaponry such as aircraft, machine guns, and a scenario disk editor that will work with the original game. QQP are, at the present time, soliciting suggestions from users as to what else to include in the game. **The Lost Admiral** is also getting the deluxe treatment; a modem option and VGA graphics are but two of the planned enhancements. ❑

CINEPLAY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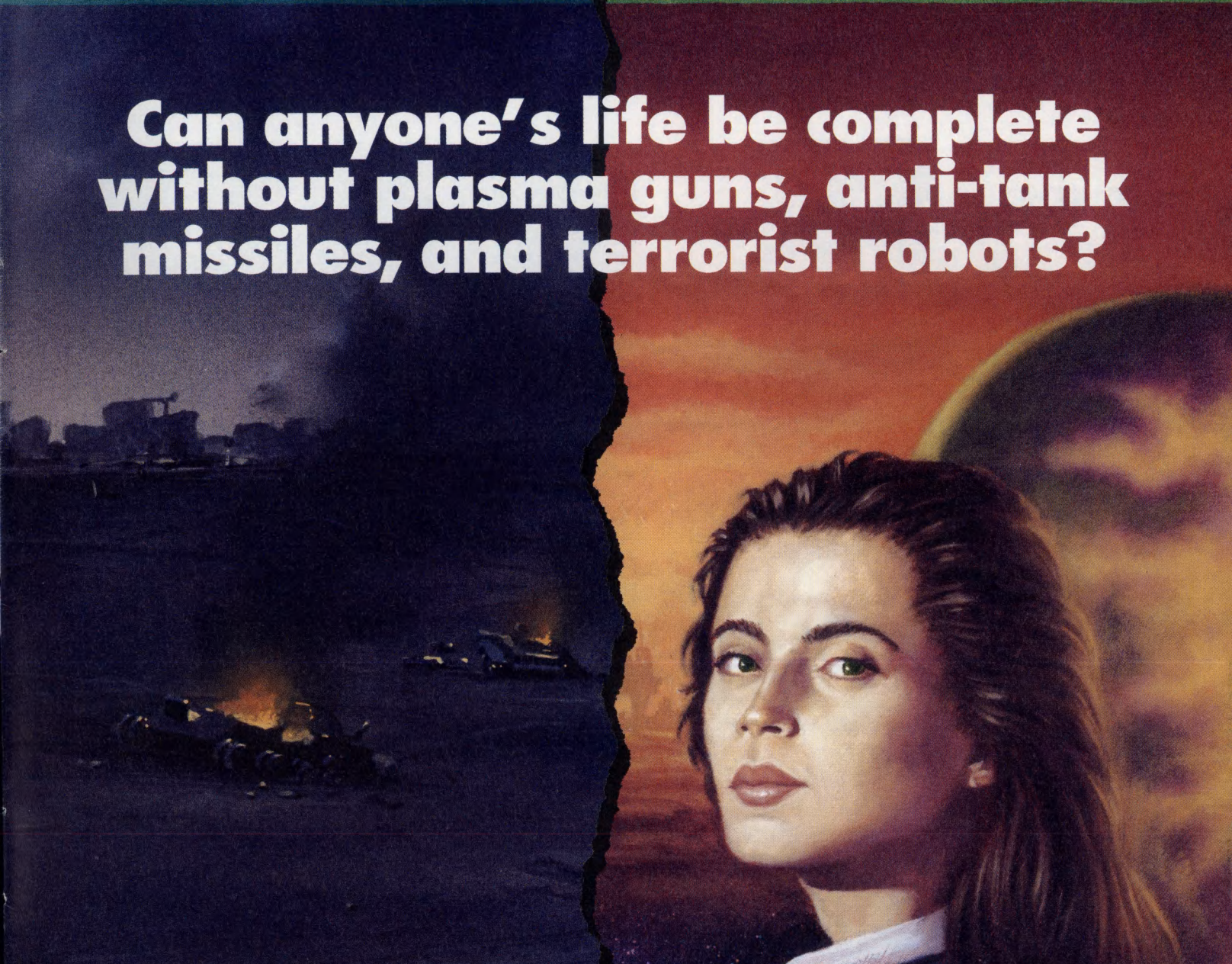
Few companies at the CES had such a wildly varying CV as Cineplay. First there was the bizarre **Free DC** with its human zoo and 'claymation' characters. Now comes the complete **Playmation For Windows**. This is nothing less than a 3D movie studio, a wondrous combination of art and animation. So the obvious release after that has to be an election game, right? But there is *some* consistency; '**Election '92**' is designed to run under Windows also. The game was in the early stages when I saw it, indeed the title is still temporary, but one of the definite features of the game is a 'mix and match' option. The player can select candidates (and running mates) from differing eras and pit them against each other on the stump. Who would have won, for example if Barry 'Mad Dog' Goldwater had run against Ross 'Bat Ears' Perot? (answer: no one).

The influence of Avalon Hill's boardgame **Mr President** is evident, and designer Kellyn Beck is quick to express his admiration for that game. In addition to the number crunching (inevitable an election game) random events will be included, plus there will be a multi-player option. Expect to see this before November 4. ❑

Can anyone's life be complete without plasma guns, anti-tank missiles, and terrorist robots?



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SUMMER CES CHICAGO

SSI

SSI appear to have realized that their current Gold Box series is nearing the end of its sell-by date. Consequently the company has developed several new engines. Well, two to be precise. **Dark Sun: Shattered Lands** introduces players to a new 16-bit engine, SSI's first since **Pools of Radiance**. This new game presents a harsh desert universe ruled by sorcerer kings and fully animated creatures that move at a very tidy frame rate. The graphics, needless to say, are superlative.

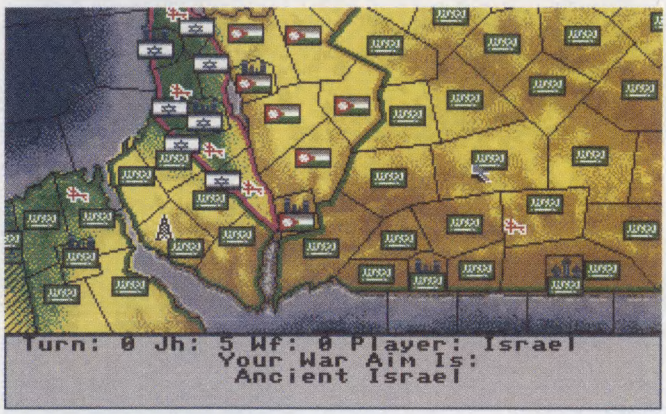
The plot can loosely be described as 'Ben Hur meets Mad Max in Space'; the player is cast as a gladiator who must escape into the wilderness and join other escaped slaves. The idea is then to create a force strong enough to nobble the evil sorcerer king's army.

The WIMP interface promises to be easy to use, as does the point-and-click combat system. Also included are sound effects and 'environmental music' for the game's different regions ('New Age music infests software shock!').

SSI's other new engine comes with the enigmatically entitled **'M'**. At first I thought this referred to James Bond's old boss, you know, the stuffed shirt who took rather a dim view of Mr Bond's tendency to poke everything that moved.

Even the plot sounds vaguely Bondish; a group of diplomats have been kidnapped and whisked away to the planet of Monsoon. An elite renegade team is immediately dispatched to rescue them. However, upon reaching the planet an alien race is encountered and instead fulfilling their usual role of cannon fodder, they are co-opted into helping with the rescue of the hostages.

The player controls four characters and a robot, and may mix characters from different races. Interaction is the key to success in this fantasy role playing game which uses CAD rendered 'cinematic scenes'. 'Players will think they're experiencing a full-blown film production' say SSI. Fine, but what does what the 'M' refer to? According to SSI, it stands for 'Magnificence', 'Mysterious', and 'Multifaceted'. I'd like to add 'Meaning' - We Couldn't Think of a Title. Both **Dark Sun** and **M** are the first games in a planned series.



M (right): earthlings shoot for a calamari breakfast

From top...
Line in the Sand: the Israelites endorse Old Testament values

Dark Sun: shattered lands, shattered statues

Mother of all sims

In the moving sims department, **Great Naval Battles** was also several steps down the road to completion since our last report. Both the animation and static screens looked really stunning, while the bridge view was slightly reminiscent of that seen in **Silent Service II**. Hardly surprising as these games share some of the same design team.

Line in the Sand, the conversion of the TSR boardgame, should be due soon. The screen shots suggest a fairly literal translation, though it will be interesting to see how the diplomatic phases are handled. Of all the gulf (board) wargames that came out after the rumble in the desert this was far and away the most original. No news, though, of Gary Grigsby's North Africa campaign - his follow-up to the World War II games that have incorporated **Second Front** and **Carrier Strike** amongst others.

Mac users should know that Ed Bever's **No Greater Glory** is now available on that format. SSI's current release, **Conflict: Korea**, has rapidly become a favorite around these parts. This war may not be the most fashionable in wargaming circles, but the AI is strong enough to have most players reaching for their history books.

SSI's upcoming range (not to mention their existing one) looked to be one of the strongest at the show, and they are one of the few major players currently offering Microprose any competition. ❑

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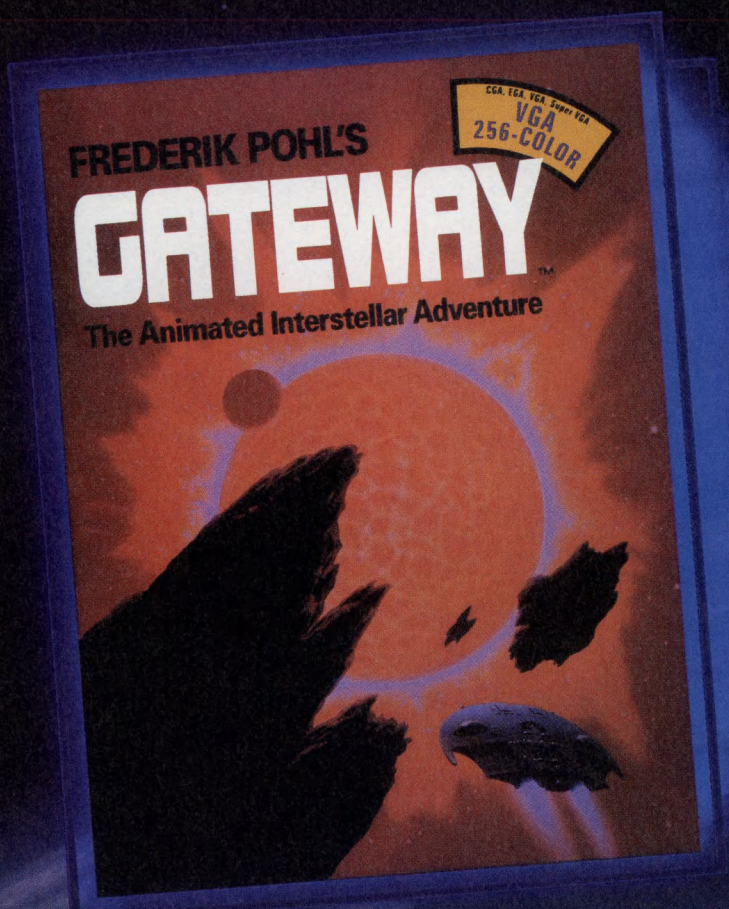

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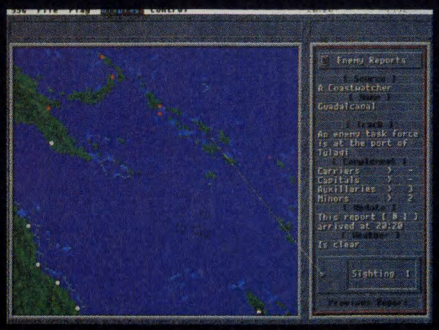

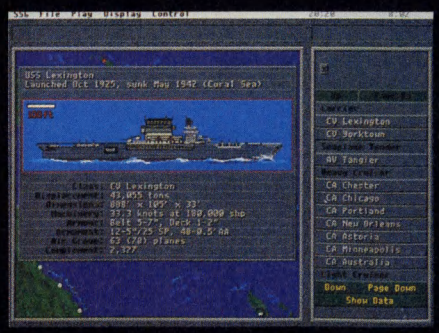

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THREE SIXTY PACIFIC

SUMMER CES CHICAGO

It's been a long time coming, though it looks as though **Patriot** will be worth the wait. Unfortunately, depending on one's preference, the first scenario will be the Gulf War. To prevent a repeat of the walkover that actually occurred, players will be able to configure the program to the n'th degree and thus speculate what would have happened if Mr Hussein had used all the might at his disposal, and also had his forces performed with a bit more gusto.

In terms of gameplay then, this first scenario closely resembles the Desert War scenario disk for **UMS II**. The big difference is, of course, the interface and the map graphics (in super VGA). Another major difference is that military icons have been dispensed with in favor of symbols, as can be seen on the accompanying screen shots.

Meanwhile, **Harpoon** is undergoing what Three Sixty say will be the 'final upgrade' to 1.3. This will contain a number of enhancements such as improved sonar models, auto sonar deployment, more accurate performance modelling, all of which, according to Three Sixty, will result in existing scenarios 'playing differently'. Contrary to rumor there will not be a **Harpoon** for Windows, though a **Harpoon II** looks probable. Three Sixty have hit on a novel way of distributing their next **Harpoon** Battleset; for every existing Battleset purchased, users will be able to obtain a new Battleset containing 12 new scenarios.

Fans of big planes will be thrilled to hear that Three Sixty and the team that brought you **Megafortress** are working on a B1 simulation. In the interim, there will be a new **Megafortress** mission disk entitled **Operation Skymaster**. This will come with 21 missions, mostly focusing on Korea, and will include the Dragonslayer Mission. Naval buffs will be reassured to know that former SPI big cheese Jim Dunnigan is *still* hard at work on what has come to be known as the 'World War II **Harpoon**', but which will be officially known as **Victory at Sea**. Don't expect to see this until '93. One game that *will* be arriving before then is the PC version of **V For Victory** in Super VGA only. Ever inventive, Three Sixty have come up with an interesting plan to persuade users to upgrade to this mode. With the next Battleset, Three Sixty hope to be able to include a coupon which will offer a substantial discount on the purchase of popular SVGA boards. The Battleset in question will feature the Velikiye Luki, Russian Front scenario. Like its forerunner, this will be a huge game with over 600 units involved. This will be available for the Mac first with the PC version to follow shortly afterwards. ❑

NOVA LOGIC

SUMMER CES CHICAGO

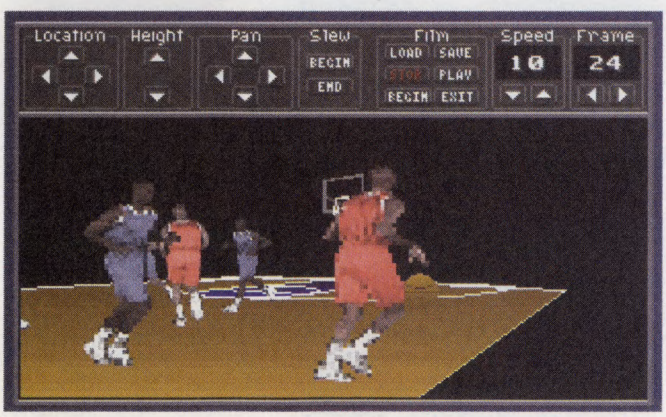
The most striking games of the show were not on the main floor, but tucked away in a hotel suite in downtown Chicago. This was where the team known as Nova Logic were camped. Readers may recall their **Wolfpack** sub sim and also the fanfare that surrounded the mysterious **Ultrabots**. 'Mysterious' because the game became a contender for the vaporware chart, but the truth can now be revealed. Data East were due to publish the game but pulled out of the floppy disk market just before release date. Nova Logic managed to secure the rights and the game will now be published by Electronic Arts next month. In between times, however, Nova Logic have been gearing themselves up for publishing in their own right, and after seeing their new games, who can blame them?

The first game to be published under their own auspices will be **Maximum Overkill** (TM), a helicopter sim that features a bit mapped rather than vectored terrain. This is the result of a 3D matrix graphic system that also permits real-time fly-bys in an interactive environment. The results are stunning. Both the terrain and the 'copter itself are among the most realistic ever seen in a flight sim (the accompanying screen shot is from a *playable* screen).

Another new game from Nova Logic is **Battlefield 2000**. This uses an advanced version of the engine developed for **Ultrabots** and is an (obviously) hypothetical tank set in the near future. Pitched at command level, **Battlefield 2000** puts the player in the role of company commander. This position involves allocating resources to the platoons and plotting routes of attack.

It is also possible to take personal command of individual vehicles in tight situations. Up to four vehicles may be assigned to each of the four platoons. Mech units include: M1A2 Battle Tank and M3 Bradley scout unit on one side, and the T80 Main Battle Tank and BMP-2 infantry fighting unit on the other. ❑

ELECTRONIC ARTS



Michael Jordan Flight: b-b-b-b-ball

Nowhere can the influences of cartridges, and the inroads they have made into the PC market, be seen to greater effect than at the Electronic Arts suite. Their human resources appear to have been ploughed into the cartridge market with the result that they barely had a single new PC game to show. The qualification in that statement is because of the presence of **Car and Driver**, a marketing tie-in with the magazine of the same name. Cars on display include the following: Chevy Corvette ZR1; Ferrari F40; Eagle Talon; Toyota MR2. Nothing you can't buy on a credit card, right? So where's the fantasy? The best feature of the game looks to be the modem option.

If **Car and Driver** looked somewhat mundane then **Michael Jordan In Flight** looked terrific. Three-sided views and super smooth scrolling could make this one of the best b-ball games yet. The only potential weakness is that it does not have full team matches: 3-on-3,1-on-1, or three point shoot-outs only. But help is at hand; later this year EA will be releasing **Team USA Basketball**. This will be a special collectors edition that will only be on sale until December 31, 1992. This will be the only computer game endorsed by the USA Basketball Association. In addition to the Olympic All-Star Team, there will be eleven international teams featuring real players from those countries. Michael Jordan will be in there, as will Magic, Bird, and Ewing. International rules will be enforced, and team uniforms will match the country's colors. The 24 second clock used in the NBA will be :30 for each offensive possession.

It's true, Electronic Arts has gone sports mad. But on the back burner there is **Ringworld**, an adventure game based on the Larry Niven novel now being put together by ex-Sierra staff who left that company in a mass exodus. Closer to hand is **The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes**, now looking quite sharp. ❑

Battlefield 2000: big bangs in the future

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SUMMER CES CHICAGO

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Thanks to the wonderful folks at Paramount Pictures, we are able to bring you the very first screen shots of **Star Trek: The Next Generation**.

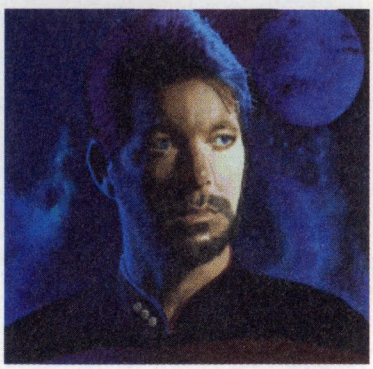
Spectrum Holobyte have now obtained the license and are working very closely with Paramount Pictures on the game. Anyone who so much as thinks of producing a *Star Trek* T-

Star Trek: talking 'bout the Next Generation

Shirt *has* to work closely with Paramount Pictures.

The game itself will be an interactive adventure based on the familiar 'the galaxy is threatened, find out by who, why, and prevent it'. Characters such as Commander Riker, Capt Pickard, and Commander Data the Android will be on hand to help out. New alien races will appear, as well as familiar ones such as the Romulans. The stories will all be brand new.

Navigation of the starship Enterprise will be set to auto pilot once the player has selected the star system to investigate. In the space combat sequence, however, the player will be able to take personal control. There will be no gratuitous blowing away of aliens, which is in keeping with the late Gene Rodenberry's 'peace on 'earth and elsewhere' philosophy. First, talk to them; *then,* blow them away.



One of the highlights of the game will be the 'beaming' sequences which SH say will be almost a separate part of the game. Upon landing on foreign soil, players may opt to control the entire party or an individual. Interaction with the characters is the key to success rather than out-and-out puzzle solving. At this point, a release date for **Star Trek: The Next Generation** is impossible to predict.

After the superhuman effort that was required to get **Falcon 3.0** out of the door, Spectrum Holybyte's immediate task is to get back on course. The first move in their rehabilitation program will be to release **Operation: Fighter Tiger** - a mission disk for **Falcon 3.0**. This will have an identical campaign system to **Falcon 3.0,** but will challenge players with new aircraft, new weapons, naval task forces,

and new missions types. There will also be three new theatres: India/Pakistan, Japan, and Korea. New enemy planes include the Mirage 2000; the MiG -31; and the UMF - a Russian fighter plane that is very top secret. Even more 'top secret' is where the money came from to build it.

Spectrum Holobyte's next new flight sim will be **Warthog A-10,** but that won't be for some time yet. ❑

SNIPS

Eddie Dombrower, the brains behind the **Earl Weaver Baseball** games, has joined Activision. Eddie says he couldn't talk to Electronic Arts without the word 'baseball' cropping up. To really confound the clerks at Central Casting, he's now working on **Return to Zork**, which will be published by Activision on the Infocom label next year. But the product that Activision are really excited about - 'Hot! Hot! Hot!' is the way they described it - is a spreadsheet for the Amiga.

Accolade are facing a summer challenge in more ways than one. 'Hot!' 'Hot!' 'Hot!' as Activsion would say. Firstly, it's going to take a real big effort to persuade anyone to buy **Summer Challenge**, the somewhat superfluous sequel to the uninspiring **Winter Challenge**. Secondly, Accolade's next challenge will be of a legal nature when their battle against Sega enters a new phase. At the moment it's Sega 2 Accolade 0, the cartridge giant having won the early skirmishes in the courts of the US and Europe. Accolade are currently forbidden to produce any more cartridges for the hallowed machine.

M' learned friends were called in when Accolade started producing cartridges for the Sega without going though the inconvenience of acquiring a license. Their technicians hacked away at the Genesis, found out what made it tick, and then went into business. This practice is known as 'reverse engineering'. Accolade contend that Sega are restricting knowledge so as to create a monopoly. Right behind them at the next court hearing will be several prominent eggheads from various universities, copyright professors, plus assorted 'freedom of knowledge' groups. More contentiously, Accolade are seeking to portray themselves as the little guy up against a Japanese giant. ❑

Discovery

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In Discovery, *you* are the master explorer and adventurer: **Set Sail** into the distance, in search of new lands; **Explore** new worlds ; **Pirates** are everywhere - be prepared for sea battles; **Create Cities** -fell trees, build farms, forts, warehouses, schools; **Trade** the produce from your new world to buy new ships; **Fight** the other nations trying to establish their empire.

In 1492 Columbus discovered America - for God, Gold and Glory!

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FEATURES:

6 New Worlds to Discover

Piracy - mutiny & battles

Land & Sea combat

Simple point and click interface

8 ship types; 4 maps

5 competing nations

YOUR CHANCE TO DISCOVER AMERICA!

Animated people develop buildings all by themselves.

Watch your empire grow.

You will need to fight off pirates and more!

Impressions

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Reader Service No. 108

SUMMER CES CHICAGO

SNIPS

New World are all set to release the latest story in the **Might and Magic** saga which has now ceased to have a numeric prefix. The next chapter is to be entitled **Clouds of Xeen** wherein the intrepid adventurers must seek to bring down the evil Lord Xeen. Animated icons have now been added to the spectacular graphics that were so much a part of **Might and Magic III**.

New World are also converting the wonderful 'cowboys in space' game, **Spaceward Ho!** to the PC from the Mac. In issue #18 Theo Clarke had this to say about the game: 'Even after several months I still find myself staggering away from the screen after an entire night of play.' Another strategy game New World will be releasing soon is **Empire Deluxe**, a complete overhaul of the seminal classic that is being put together by Mark Baldwin and Bob Rakofsky. It was Mark, of course, who rewrote the original game for the PC way back when. Another Mark Baldwin game will appear on the Mindcraft label soon under the title **Legions of Krella**. This expands on the **Star Fleet** series of strategy simulations that dates right back to the boardgames put out by Task Force Games. The player takes control of the Krellan fleet and attempts to conquer the planets of the United Galactic Alliance. Units include troop transports, battle cruiser, destroyers, and supply ships. **Legions of Krella** is a real-time strategy game rather than one where things boldly fly where no things have etc...Still with Mindcraft, watch out for **Mercenaries**, a new squad level futuristic wargame with a role playing element. Hire 'soldiers of fortunes', travel to exotic planets, encounter strange creatures, and waste them! Comes with a scenario builder.

Top and above Unnatural Selection: trouble on animal farm

Doom looms

The lack of any Lucasarts presence at the CES seems to confirm that they are history, especially now that Noah Feinstein has packed his bags. It's possible they will publish games from outside contractors, but I wouldn't bet money on it. Look at the ending of **Monkey Island 2**. Kinda puts the kibosh on sequels, no? Most of their current release schedule consists of CD ROM conversions and **SWOTL** add-ons. The problem here has obviously not been a lack of quality, if Lucasarts do go down the pan then the loss will be everybody's. As this column pointed out some time ago, the staff's disaffection stemmed from George Lucas' insistence that the company must make more money, or just *some* money. Perhaps this is to make up for some of his loss making films? I mean really, does anyone remember *Howard the Duck*?

It's unnatural!

From one duck to another; the far more famous, Donald. For the past year Donald and his pals have been seeking new fame as software stars for Disney. The results have been mixed, both for the farmyard gang and for the licensed properties such as **The Rocketeer**. Now, however, Disney are set to launch a couple of strategy titles, one of which is **Heaven and Earth: A Dazzling Journey for the Mind**. With a title like that, it's inevitably an anticlimax to learn that it's a card game. Designed by the makers of **Ishido** and **Shanghai**, **Heaven and Earth** is inspired by the Japanese card game, Hanafuda. The deck includes 'wild cards' that have animated sound effects. There is also a pendulum that contains animations and which is said to provide a 'hypnotic', relaxing diversion' ('zzz).

If a 'dazzling journey for the mind' sounds a bit too much, then how's about an 'experiment in genetic warfare'? Create, breed, and mutate lethal genetic warriors and march them off to a do or die battle. That's more like it! This is the premise that the most un-Disney like title ever - **Unnatural Selection: An Experiment in Genetic Warfare** - offers. The 256 color VGA graphics includes actors and stop action photography of the mutations. Can't wait, but whatever would Minnie think? ❑

Clouds of Xeen: this reviewer should wear a bag over his head

SIEGE

The hordes approach! Is the moat full? Are the archers on the battlements? Is the drawbridge raised? Are the cellars full of food and water? Are there plenty of bandages and splints? Are the cauldrons of oil boiling atop the towers? Can your castle withstand the ***Siege??***

Mindcraft presents: ***Siege***. Finally, a strategic simulation of pulse pounding, thought provoking medieval style castle assault.

Historical and Fantasical elements combine to challenge your leadership with a never-ending variety of contests and dilemmas. Do your knights sortie against the rabble outside your gates? Can your spies learn the enemy's plans in the dead of night, and return to tell the tale? Is your wizard still strong enough to shroud the enemy camp in sheets of flame to halt their progress?

Siege gives you four castles to attack and defend. You can't do it all yourself; you must depend on your vassals and their troops, each with his or her own abilities and skills.

Attack or defend in any one-castle scenario, then test your mettle in extended campaigns to prove your mastery of the art of Siege. Or design your own scenarios. What if Highrock Fortress were held by trolls, or Usk'hem Gart by elves? More castles, more scenarios, and more campaigns are on their way from Mindcraft.

MINDCRAFT

2291 205th Street, Suite 201, Torrance, CA 90501

Actual screen photos from the IBM VGA version.

Reader Service No. 10

SUMMER CES CHICAGO

SNIPS

One of the funniest stories of the show concerned the Psygnosis game **Lemmings**. It seems that the Liverpool based company took great exception to certain scenes in Gametek's **Humans**, their grouch being that certain characters in the game were too close for comfort to their own wee little creatures. Gametek took due note and subsequently made one addition: during the game the eponymous humans decide to have a picnic, and what's that spinning around on the spit? Roast lemmings anyone?

European strategy specialists Impressions should now have an office up and running in Connecticut. One of their games to look out for is **Air Bucks**, which aims to do for planes what **Railroad Tycoon** did for trains.

Air Bucks: Aeroflop passengers prepare to check their vodka supplies

This is a business game involving the running of a charter airline; hire planes, overbook those passengers, file chapter 11!

Ubi Soft are to release **Mega lo Mania** for the PC. The Amiga version of this was reviewed in issue #13. John Scott's comments were: '... an excellent little game'...'provided me with the most fun on my Amiga I've had for ages'. Konami are set to release **Utopia**, which was also the subject of a rave by the reviewing Reverend. But now for some late breaking gossip. Remember **NFL Challenge**, the football game published by XOR (which explains what all the 'x's and 'o's were in the game). Well the license has been snapped up by SSI, who are going to revamp it and publish it as **NFL Challenge Deluxe**.

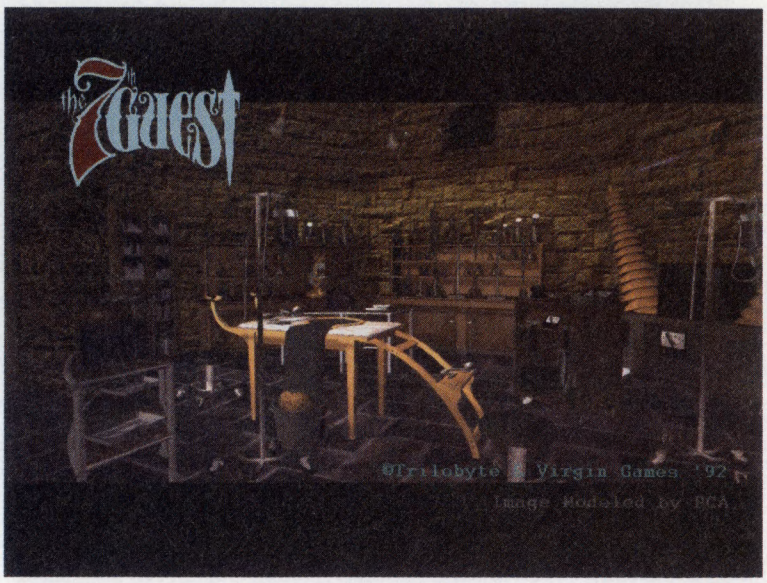
Another big shift involved Westwood Associates, who produced many SSI games including **Eye of the Beholder**, signing on for Virgin Games. Their first game for Virgin will be **Kyrandia**, a pretty looking Sierra style adventure. Their second game, and this is a real surprise, will be **Dune: Battle for Kiarki**. This has nothing do with the first **Dune** game released by Virgin, who say this will be an out-and-out strategy game. Virgin have also developed **Monopoly for Windows**, and very cute it looks too. The boot, the dog, etc are all animated now. From one of the world's most venerable proprietary games to one of the most advanced: **Guest**, the first one gigabyte game, and now it's actually got a plot to go with its tag of merely being one of the eight wonders of the world. The 22 rooms in the mansion each have their own secrets and puzzles to solve 'much the same manner as the Kubrick movie, *The Shining*, ' say Virgin. For those who don't have a CD ROM drive, the game can be played off 3000 360K floppies. Even the richest man in the universe, Bill Gates of Microsoft, was impressed. Bill, it seems, is something of a simulations fan and has set up a division in his company both to license existing sims for Windows, and also to develop original games to run under Windows. The first example of the former can be seen shortly in **Microsoft Golf for Windows**. This is, in fact, our old friend **Links**. Needless to say, it runs slower under Windows but has the advantage of being able to configure the screen as one pleases.

Tom Landry Strategy Football: not in Dolby stereo

On Merit

To give some idea of the chaotic nature of release dates, Merit are just about to release a game that appeared in my very first CES report, way back in issue #6. But who cares? For **Traders** looked as wacky as ever. This is the multi player snail trading game set in outer space that was inspired by **M.U.L.E.** A full review of this will appear in our next issue.

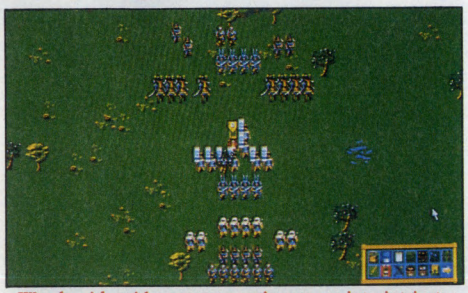
More conventionally, Merit also had **Tom Landry Strategy Football**. As the title suggests, there are no full-motion, upside down replays in Dolby stereo here. This is an uncompromising strategy game for thinking players. The stats are comprehensive, and, importantly, they accumulate during the game. This allows the performance of individual players to be tracked as the game progresses. The graphics are respectable but are really only there to depict the outcome of plays. All in all, a very impressive looking game. ❑



Guest: the lab gets a shining

DON'T GET MAD...

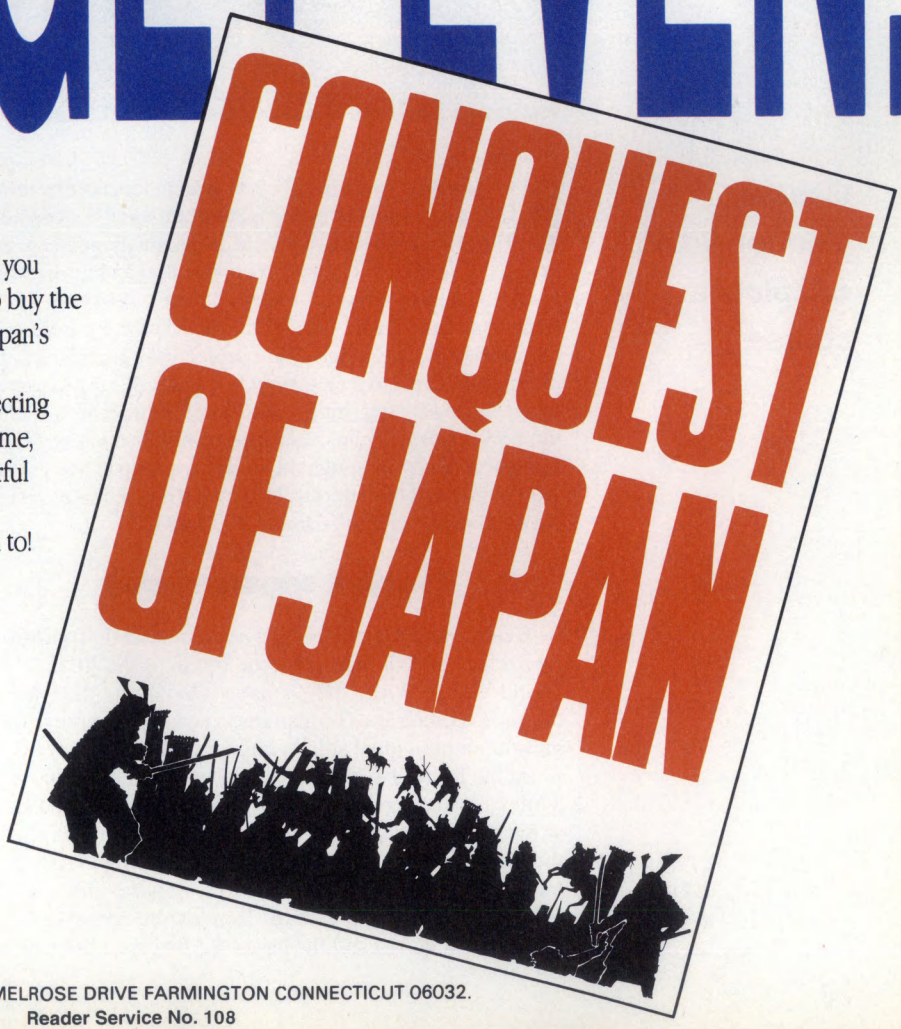
...GET EVEN!



Watch with pride as your warriors move into intricate formations (HIGH RESOLUTION mode IBM PC only).

The game is full of sumptuous graphics.

CONQUEST OF JAPAN



Your Chance to get your own back! Conquest of Japan gives you five cities, each with money to hire armies -it is up to you to buy the right soldiers, and direct your armies to conquer Honshu, Japan's main island! In a truly epic production, you are both the general,planning campaigns, and the army commander, directing troops within each battle. All battles are played out in real time, with your soldiers moving into formation in fantastic, colourful animation! You can become as involved as you like -from watching progress, to instructing individual men if you wish to! You can even choose to play each battle in Hi Res (386/25 machines or better reccommended) or faster Low Res.

FEATURES:

- *Miniature-style war simulation*
- *Cities located differently each game*
- *Choice of authentic troop formations*
- *Simple to play*
- *Your chance to conquer Japan!!*

Impressions IMPRESSIONS SOFTWARE INC. 7 MELROSE DRIVE FARMINGTON CONNECTICUT 06032.

Reader Service No. 108

GREAT NAVAL BATTLES:
NORTH ATLANTIC 1939-1943

George MacDonald of SSI plots a course

I love WW II warships; they're among the most beautiful instruments of power projection ever conceived. These majestic ships combined fantasies of power with dreams of freedom. They were powerful; warships had up to 40,000 tons of armor, engines, and guns. And they were free; they sailed vast oceans unconstrained by political boundaries. Today, when power projection comes at the tip of a missile, I like to remember when a nation's status came from the speed of her ships, the thickness of their armor, and the power of their guns. Because of my fascination with these vessels, I was delighted when my group at SSI got to work with the IO Design Group on what has become **Great Naval Battles: North Atlantic 1939-1943**

Tactical engagements

Great Naval Battles (GNB) is a simulator that portrays the surface and air warfare in the Battle of the Atlantic in World War II. With **GNB**, a player can control the fate of the entire British and German fleets and still command the guns of an individual ship in combat.

At the heart of **GNB** are tactical engagements, blazing battles between groups of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. In a tactical engagement, any ship on one's side of the battle may be commanded. A press of the TAB key moves the player from ship to ship within the force.

A ship may be commanded from the bridge, choosing the ship's direction and the target for its guns. The ship's systems will carry out these orders automatically: firing the guns when in range, adjusting course and speed to stay with the target, and assigning damage control parties to repair any damage to the ship. The player can also move down from the bridge to control the various systems manually, and also individually control the ship's helm, primary guns, secondary guns, torpedoes, and damage control teams.

This combination of automatic and manual control allows nearly any level of command to be assumed. In a single ship battle, like the Bismark vs the Hood, the player can move from station to station, aiming individual turrets or counter flooding an individual compartment, or in a battle of great fleets, from ship to ship, directing the sweep of the battle and targeting the enemy's vulnerable ships.

Plotting board

The gunnery stations show an 'out the gun sight' view of the enemy, a plotting board view of all spotted ships in the battle, and an overhead view of the firing ship that includes turrets that track the enemy target. When the player presses the 'fire' button, the guns roar. Seconds later, the gun sight view shows giant shell splashes marking near misses and fiery explosions showing penetrating hits. Shell splashes and explosions from incoming fire are shown on the ship's overhead view. Damage is graphically displayed by crumpled armor and destroyed turrets.

The view of other stations is equally vivid. The giant

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'out the window' view from the spotter's station allows the player to zoom in on the detailed bit-mapped ships. The great plotting board at the helm provides an overview of the entire battle. The stylized damage control screen displays the status of the ship's systems. Fire, flooding, and damage control teams are all graphically displayed. Every screen shows the necessary information to make the right decisions.

Surface and air

The full history of the campaign and of the ships is an integral part of **GNB**. At any time during the game the Briefings menu can be accessed to get detailed background on the systems, ships, operations, history and important engagements that make up the Battle for the Atlantic. These briefings include art from the US National Archives. The documentation also includes a complete history of the campaign and detailed information of the ships and planes of the period.

Beyond purely tactical engagements, **GNB** also covers the entire surface and air campaign in the Battle of the Atlantic. The player assigns ships to task forces and directs the task forces on a detailed map of the North Atlantic. The ports and air bases for land based airplanes are also shown on the map. When a friendly task force intercepts an enemy task force, a tactical engagement ensues.

The Battle of the Atlantic in World War II was a battle to keep open, or close down the flow of merchant ships to Britain. These ships carried the raw materials and manufactured goods that were the life-blood of the Allied war effort. If the Germans could sink enough merchant ships and disrupt the flow of goods to Britain, future Allied operations against Germany would be difficult or impossible. Each German success delayed the Allied invasion of Europe that much longer, while each British victory at sea brought D-Day closer.

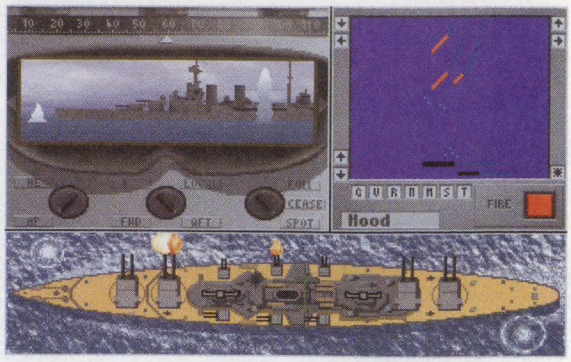
Full campaign

In the full **GNB** campaign, victory is determined by the date when the Allies can launch the D-Day invasion. If the Germans can sink a lot of merchant ships early, and force the British fleet to spend all of its time hunting surface raiders, then the D-Day build-up will take much longer than it did historically. If the British can eliminate the German surface fleet early, it will be free to concentrate on protecting the convoys and the D-Day build-up will be completed much sooner. The future of Europe is in the player's hands.

But **Great Naval Battles** wasn't always exactly like this.

Computer game development at SSI is a cooperative effort between the designers, programers, and artists in the development group and the associate producer at SSI. In the case of **GNB**, the IO Design Group came to SSI with a thick specification document for a game they called Bismark. They got the inspiration for the game when they saw a *National Geographic Magazine* article that showed the search for the sunken remains of the battleship Bismark. The basic design for a first class WW II warship simulator was in the specs. The programer and artist, Roy Gibson and Kim Biscoe, were both experienced and enthusiastic. A contract was signed and the creation of the game was begun.

Roy and Kim proceeded on the project for months,



creating the underlying graphics and display drivers and making the point of view ship and control screen graphics. One of Roy's biggest tasks was putting together and tuning the main game loop which controls how all the ships, airplanes, and shells move through time and space. The tactical game was actually playable in text form long before the graphics were implemented to look 'out the gun sight'.

Historical research

As the project progressed, Professor Edward Bever was added to the team *(Prof Bever was also the designer of SSI's **No Greater Glory** - Ed)*. He generated a mountain of data and background on the ships, the tactical engagements, the campaign, and the historical briefings. Development proceeded over long distance: by phone, modem, and fax.

SSI associate producer Ken Humphries worked with audio programer Ralph Thomas to produce the music and booming digital sound effects for the game. Roy and Kim took their computer and scanner to the US National Archives and scanned in over a hundred and sixty photographs for use in the game and the manual. Ed generated the data necessary to track every merchantman that crossed the Atlantic during the campaign. He also wrote the manual.

Feedback

Once the game was playable, SSI's test department got into the act. Ken coordinated the feedback of the testers as they asked hundreds of questions and made hundreds of suggestions. 'What are the effects of assigning British ships to the Indian Ocean?' 'When do the German ships get to use French ports?' 'I think you should be able to turn the ship and torpedo wakes on and off!' 'The plotting board should have scroll bars!' Ken would integrate the comments together and relay the questions and suggestions: Roy, Kim, and Ed would answer the questions and implement the changes.

After all our toil, **Great Naval Battles: North Atlantic 1939-1943** has turned out better than we had dared hope. The power and majesty of the great warships is there. The freedom of the vast seas is there. The tension of knowing the next shot could be your last is there. The player's control of two great fleets at a turning point in history is there. I would like to think that **Great Naval Battles** is a game which will satisfy strategy and simulation players alike. ❑

***Great Naval Battles: 1939-1943** will be published by SSI in late August. In the UK the game will be distributed by US Gold.*

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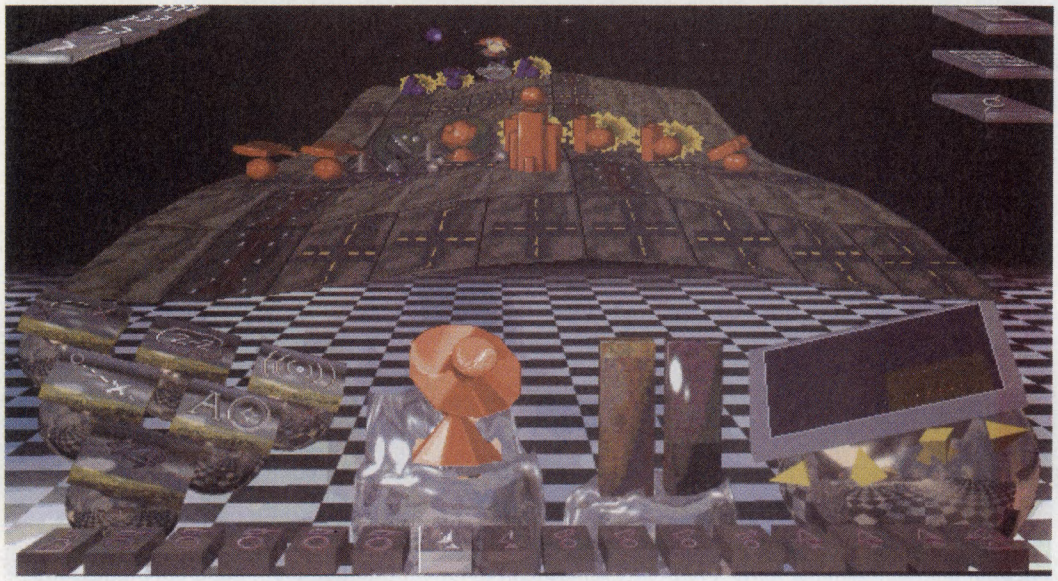
Theatre of War

A real time act

By Stuart Mitchell



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IBM PC

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VGA and Super VGA

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mouse and keyboard

Players
1-2 via null modem cable

Notes
You must have EMS or XMS memory to use Super VGA

When I first heard of **Theatre of War**, it was described as a kind of abstract chess-like game. The description didn't excite me, and I suspected that there was more to it than that. Now that I've had a chance to play the game, I can best summarize **Theatre of War** as an abstract chess-like game with Super VGA graphics.

Squaring up

Theatre of War (**TOW**) is a game played on a square grid (like a chessboard). Each player has an equal number of pieces (called warriors) of the same types. The types are limited, and though named for various real-world combat units, are essentially abstractions. Each side has one piece that acts like the King in chess - elimination of this piece ends the game. All of this is displayed using Super VGA graphics at 640x400x256 resolution, providing the right equipment is in place. The game will also run in conventional VGA.

The resemblance to chess is only partial. Unlike chess, in **TOW** there are different sets of warriors. Each set is comprised of different unit types with vastly different capabilities. The three sets are the Medieval set, the Great War set, and the Contemporary set. The pieces in **TOW** are not limited in their movement. Instead, different kinds of orders can be issued to each type of warrior. And each warrior has different attack and defense abilities. For example, in the Medieval set there is a catapult unit. The catapult can attack units from a distance by lobbing what appears to be a big ball bearing at them. Other units such as the swordsmen must move into the same square as their opponent to attack.

The final difference between **TOW** and chess is dramatic - the action in **TOW** occurs in real time. While the player moves, the computer opponent is moving. In more difficult scenarios, the computer player is likely moving twice as fast. *C'est le guerre.*

Losing your marbles

As mentioned earlier, **TOW** uses high resolution graphics. The pieces and board were created using 3D CAD and rendering software. This gives the game a very polished three dimensional look. Unfortunately, the pieces have been rendered as geometric abstractions. For example, swordsmen are large blue (or red) marbles with a vaguely sword-like appendage sticking out at an angle. Tanks in the Great War set are rendered as sort of squat little go carts with a flat cap. And so on.

Combat in **TOW** is displayed dynamically in the manner of **Battle Chess**. Missile attacks (catapults, archers, gatling guns, etc.) are shown by having projectiles fly across intervening squares to hit their targets. Units in the same square convert to strange ghost-like plastic cavemen, bashing at each other with plastic swords. The effect is rather muted, though the visual feedback is sometimes helpful. There are some additional wrinkles to play. Terrain is not uniform across the board. Squares of different colors take differing amounts of time to cross. And certain units can alter the type of square, further impeding (or speeding) movement.

Each warrior has health and strength ratings. A warrior that loses all its health is dead and removed from play, while those with low strength cannot move or attack. In each set, there is at least one unit type that can replenish the strength of other units. The game supports one or two players. A null modem cable is required for two player mode.

Off the pace

The use of Super VGA was accomplished very smoothly. I had no problems on either of two different machines that I installed the game to. However, I would much rather have seen the higher resolution used to create detailed units rather than the low-detail abstractions featured in each set. And I simply disliked the real-time aspect. In the simpler scenarios, the computer moved sluggishly (and foolishly) and games ended quickly. In larger scenarios, I found myself unable to keep up with the pace of the computer player.

I suspect there is a good game in **Theatre of War**, but I couldn't locate it. The combination of abstract pieces and real-time combat proved too much for this grognard. Those who thought **Battle Chess** was a breakthrough in gaming or loved the real-time aspect of **Command HQ** may wish to give **Theatre of War** a look. For everyone else, I advise caution. ❑

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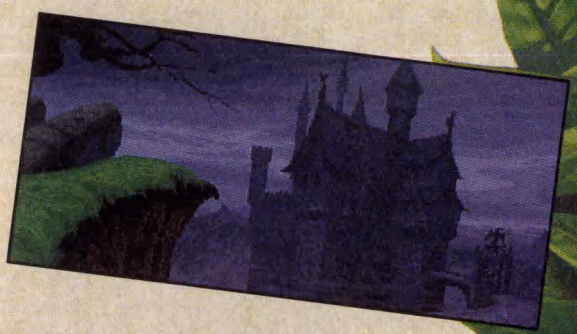

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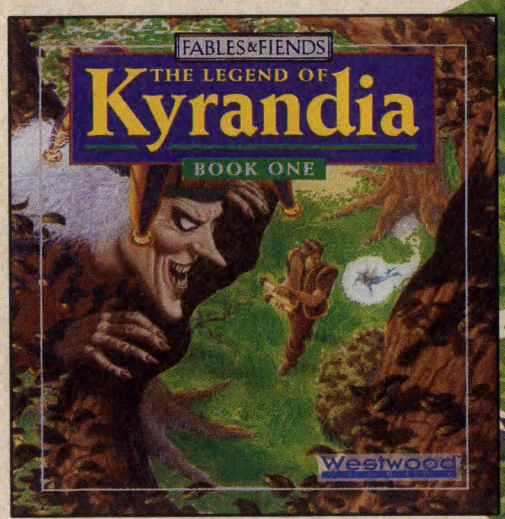

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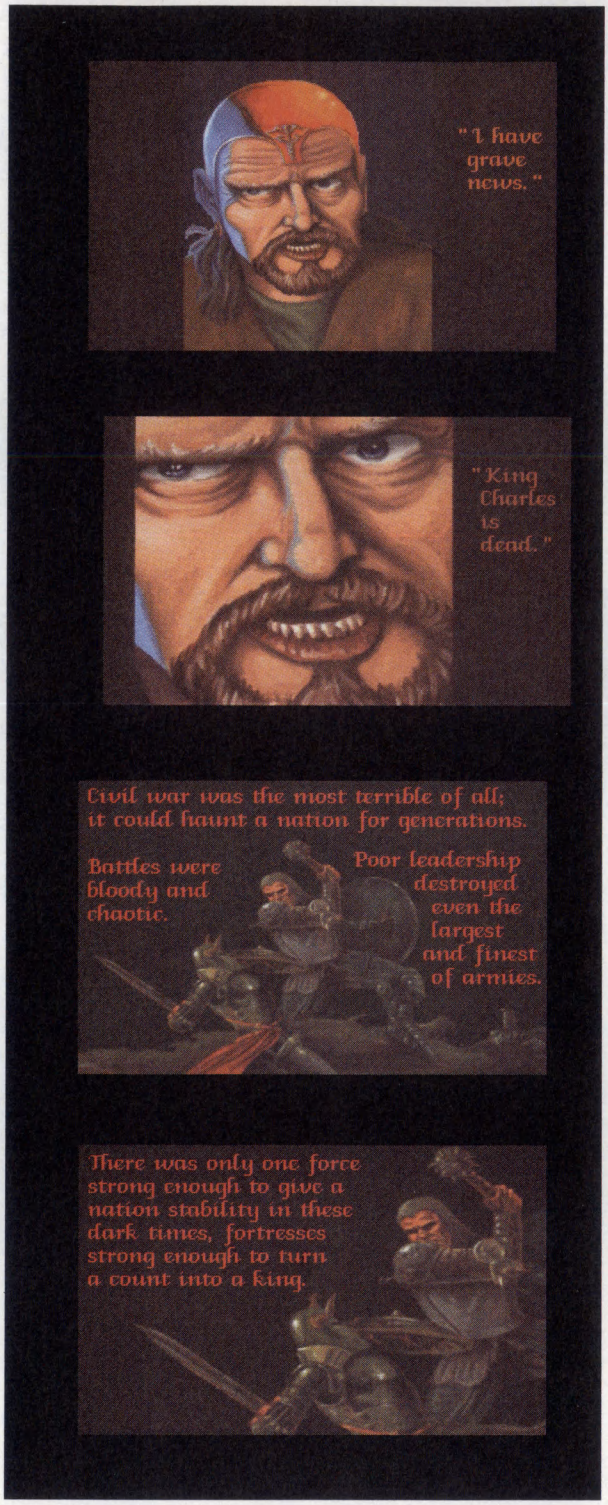
CASTLES II:
SIEGE AND CONQUEST

Baron Vincent DeNardo of the realm of Interplay explains the rules of the land


"I have grave news."
"King Charles is dead."
Civil war was the most terrible of all; it could haunt a nation for generations.
Battles were bloody and chaotic.
Poor leadership destroyed even the largest and finest of armies.
There was only one force strong enough to give a nation stability in these dark times, fortresses strong enough to turn a count into a king.

The follow-up to **Castles** is a strategic game of political prowess, administrative acumen, and military mastery. To win the game, the player's five computer opponents must be defeated and the rank of King of the realm (the realm being defined as a pseudo-French landscape, circa 1300) obtained.

The player has the option of being any one of five different personalities in the game. The computer will always play the Church and the remaining four barons. The strategic map is divided into 36 territories, each territory having a specific resource in it. This changes randomly from game to game, so a territory that has strategic value because it contains gold, may have grain in it the next game. Yet, it could still have strategic value because the player may not own any other territories containing grain, and he would need to feed his people to keep their happiness at a high enough level.

Each personality in the game is rated in three categories: Administrative skill, Military prowess, and Diplomatic ability. These ratings are on a 1 to 9 scale. When starting out, a total of 5 or 6 points will be distributed in different areas to reflect historical and geographical positions. To win the game, a certain number of ratings points, with a maximum of 9 in one of the categories, will need to be reached. This means the game can be won in any of three different ways. Combining that with the ability to start in any of the five different positions, assures that the game can be replayed a large number of times with a wide variety of strategies and outcomes.

HARD LABOR

The heart of the game lies in a system of Tasks. To accomplish anything, the player must assign ratings points to a variety of tasks. Tasks fall into three categories reflecting each of the three ratings areas. Until ratings are raised to a certain level, one task in each area may be attempted. Administrative tasks would include castle building, grain harvesting, gold and iron mining, and timber gathering. Political tasks would include sending diplomatic missions, scouting surrounding territories, spying on enemies, and sending out saboteurs. Military tasks would include recruiting troops, attacking militia and castles, or policing the realm to increase task efficiency.

To attempt any of the above, the player would select a task to perform and assign the points necessary to start the job. More points can be assigned to a task thereby getting the job done quicker; but, once a job is started and points are assigned, the ratings allotment may not be changed. The task may be stopped before completion with the ratings points going back into the pool for reassignment, but any work not finished is lost. There are

never enough points to do everything, so knowing what to do and when to do it is critical.

MAKE WAR

Combat in the game is an extension of the original **Castles** combat system. Troops include infantry, archers and cavalry (if the player's military rating is high enough). When going out to bust enemy castles, a strong military leader will also have the option to include catapults and ballistae (if enough resources were put into research and development). In addition to attacking castles, there will also be involvement with enemy militia.

When first conquering a neutral territory, there will be a battle with that territory's militia, so there will be several army versus army battles. The player will probably fight 3 to 4 field battles for every castle attacked.

Castle building is no longer the focal point that it was in the first game. To build a castle now, a number of ratings points will be assigned (there are never enough). Once this has been done, the screen will switch to a three quarter, top-down view, and the castle elements will be placed. New pieces include high or low walls and a keep.

The keep is the most important part of the castle. If a keep falls, the player has lost the castle, so it is critically important to locate walls and towers to protect the keep area. Once a castle has been laid out, a decision must be made whether to have it built from the inside out (keep first, inner walls next, and finally curtain walls), outside in, or evenly. Once that is done, the castle builds automatically. Periodic checks on the building may be made to monitor progress, but the master castle builder handles all the details allowing concentration on other problems of state.

There will now be an option to save a number of favorite castle designs and call them up when desired. They'll need to be modified because of terrain differences, but it can be a time saver. Castles can now be viewed from all four sides, so when walls have been penetrated, troops can be arranged accordingly. There is now a spying option which enables the gathering of information about opponent's military or castles. Before combat, it's always a good idea to see what one's going up against. Of course, the opponents can do the same and it's possible they may even steal some castle designs.

DEAR BARON...

One of the best-loved features of **Castles** were the plots and messages. They were often humorous and broke up the everyday monotony of keeping laborers moving from wall to wall. For **Castles II**, the plots have been enriched to become a major part of the game. There is one main story line that runs through the game, and the player will always be involved in that story no matter which position he decides to play. But each of the starting barons has his own unique story line, so the choice of who to play determines what is seen and known.

At certain times in the game, messengers will appear or random events will occur. These frequently will coincide with digitized film footage of the appropriate action. The mini-movies typically run 5 to 10 seconds and give a nice period feel to the messages. Since the plot engine has been written in its own language, there can now be a variety of responses to the original message, which in turn can trigger more information and further questions. The plot engine will also drive a good portion of the artificial intelligence of the game, so any actions taken will definitely have repercussions down the line. Investing in research and development just might get better military equipment. And an offer of marriage refused just might acquire an implacable enemy.

YE OLDE CLOCK

Diplomacy is also a major portion of the game. Establishing good relations with other barons, finding good trading partners, forming military alliances, and keeping the church coffers filled will all be necessary to survive for any length of time, much less win the game. Even if the player tries to win the game as a military king, he will still need to keep his opponents appeased. The bigger a player gets, the more he is disliked by others.

The game plays in real time, the strategic clock only stopping when messages are delivered, battles occur, or when a check is made on the progress of his castle building. The clock can be slowed down or sped up, so the game may always be played at one's own pace.

There's never enough time or resources to do everything desired in the game, so **Castles II** is really a game of trade-offs. Every action impacts the game in some way and it will take an astute player to keep from going under. With the multiple story lines and different starting positions, **Castles II** should provide quite a challenge. ❑

Castles II: Siege and Conquest *will be published by Interplay in September.*

WORLDS AT WAR

The History of Wargames by Ezra Sidran

Part 1: The (very) early years

After the domestication of animals and crops, mankind, with its new found leisure time, was able to indulge in its first two pastimes: games and warfare. While it is certain that war predates games, they are both group activities that trace their advent back thousands of years to the veritable dawn of civilization.

The oldest known board games were played by the Egyptians during the Fourth Dynasty (2650-2134 B.C.) and included Tau, or the game of Robbers (later known to the Romans as *Ludus Latrunculorum*), Senet (which survives to this day and is played by modern Egyptians as Seega), Han (the game of the Bowl) and the Game of the Sacred Way (known as Hiera Gramme to the Greeks). It is not uncommon to find richly ornamented Senet sets in royal tombs. An especially superb specimen of carved rosewood was discovered in the final resting place of Queen Hatasu. While pieces were moved and captured, none of these board games, however, had an intrinsically military motif. Nor were they used as training exercises for cadets or professional warriors. It was, of course, chess that this distinction belonged to.

Trouble and strife

The precursor of modern chess was a Ceylonese wargame called Chaturanga, allegedly invented by the wife of King Ravana when his capital, Lanka, was besieged by Rama sometime in the ancient mists of Ceylonese pre-history.

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Though Sir William Jones dated the invention of Chaturanga to 2000 B C, it is likely to be of more recent design. A complete description of the game is given in the Bhavishya Purana, a section of the great poem, Mahabharata.

Chaturanga was played by two teams of four players. The forces for each side consisted of Rajah, or Shah, an Elephant, a Horse, a Ship, or Tower and four Foot Soldiers, or Pawns. The order of play went sequentially from red, green, yellow to black. The Shah (King), Elephant (Rook) and the Horse (Knight) moved as in modern chess while the Tower always moved exactly two squares diagonally, hopping over any intermediate piece. The opening move for each army was determined by the throw of one die: a one for either a Pawn or Shah, a two for the Tower, three for the Horse, four for the Elephant with the five and six sides of the die being blank. Chaturanga was a gambling game played for great stakes. Among the list of losses recorded in ancient literature are estates, principalities, petty kingdoms, wives, children and other relatives.

The Chinese game Choke choo-hong-ki, or Game of the Science of War, appeared later - about 250 B.C. - and almost certainly is at least partially derived from Chaturanga. Like its predecessor, Choke choo-hong-ki is reputed to have been invented during a siege.

The board is unique in that the pieces were positioned on the intersections of lines, rather than in the spaces between, which allowed for a nine by nine matrix instead of the traditional eight by eight. The two armies were separated by a river, uncrossable to the elephants, called the Kia-ho, or Dividing River. The General and his two companion Mandarins may not leave the Fortress or three by three matrix with diagonal lines in the center of the army.

Japan bashing

Increasingly warlike variants of chess spread throughout Asia over the next millennium. Of special interest was Shio-ghi, the Japanese variant of chess, which kept a nine by nine board borrowed from Choke choo-hong-ki and added even more pieces until a total of fourteen had been reached. Shio-ghi flourished under the Shoguns but fell into disrepute after the Revolution of 1867. However, the game regained its former popularity at the end of the Nineteenth century, perhaps in conjunction with Japan's current military expansion and awareness.

Tamerlane the Great played a massive version of chess on a board of eleven squares by ten, populated with fifteen different types of pieces: Shah, Vizir, Ferz (General), Zarafah (Giraffe), Taliah (Advanced Picket), Asp (Horse), Rook, Pil (Elephant), Jamal (Camel), Dabbabahs (War Engines) and Piyade (Pawn). Tammerlane's Chess also included the addition of two special squares that extended from the edge of board (located at squares 18 and 111).

Burmese chess, while employing only the six standard pieces that we are familiar with today (though the Queen was restricted to moving only one square in any direction), contributed a very military-like starting position. This game, perhaps even more than its predecessors, was attempting to simulate warfare; albeit in a rather stylized manner.

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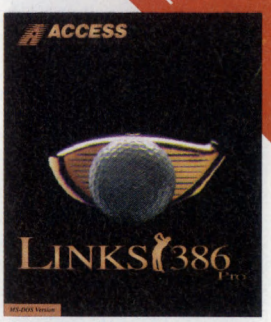

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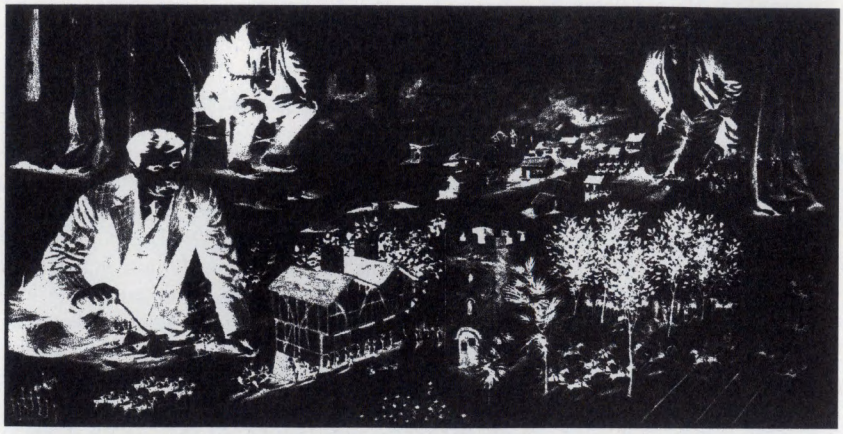

The shape of things to come: H G Wells gets down to playing Little Wars

Meanwhile, in Europe, variations on chess were beginning to evolve into wargaming as we know it today. In 1664 Christopher Weikhmann of Ulm, Germany, developed *koenigspiel*, or The King's Game. *Koenigspiel*, not unlike Choke choo-hong-ki, had an expanded board and more game pieces for a total of thirty per side.

Apparently, Weikhmann's game spawned a host of imitators and the genre became collectively known as 'war chess'. *Koenigspiel* obviously filled a keen need among the titled nobility and the professional warrior classes. It was followed in 1780 by a creation of Dr. C. L. Helwig, who expanded the board to 1,666 squares and added solid red squares for mountains, blue squares for water, light green squares for marshes, dark green squares for forests, half-red squares for towns and alternating black and white squares for open terrain.

French dressing

In 1797, the military historian, and the author of *A Mathematical System of Applied Tactics and the Science of War Proper*, George Venturini made a significant contribution to wargaming. Venturini not only nearly doubled Helwig's gameboard to 3,600 squares but, more importantly, he arranged the squares to simulate the terrain of the frontier between France and Belgium.

In other words, Venturini created the first real attempt to simulate military maneuvers on an actual map of real terrain. This is the first recorded attempt to simulate physical reality in the context of a two-dimensional game. Furthermore, Venturini's game pieces represented larger unit formations rather than individual soldiers or animals.

Heretofore, Venturini's predecessors simply constructed a game that at best stole the trappings and titles of militaria without any attempt to move from the abstract to the concrete. Venturini took the first tentative step towards a simulation, or model, based on the physical. The game manual was over sixty pages in length.

It is important to note that 18 years before Venturini, the Scotsman John Clerk, apparently for his own edification, created miniature fleets of whittled wood with which he recreated past great naval battles and simulated future, yet unknown, conflicts. Apparently, Clerk was influential in convincing first, Sir George Rodney, and later, Lord Nelson, of the importance of quickly closing with, and then breaking an enemy's line. While Clerk's contribution cannot be understated, it is important to note that Clerk primarily used his miniatures as an aid to the development and understanding of tactics and never intended mass production or distribution of his game. Nonetheless, Clerk must certainly be credited with the first use of miniatures in the modern context.

For king and country

In 1811, the Prussian military instructor, Baron von Reisswitz created a wargaming system employing a sand table and blocks of wood, cut to scale, that represented various unit's frontages. His son, Lieutenant George Heinrich Rudolph Johann von Reiswitz, made considerable improvements to the system, and in 1824 published his instructions for the *Representation of Tactical Maneuvers under the Guise of a Wargame Known commonly as Kriegsspiel*. The equipment consisted of a four square mile map at a 1:8,000 scale, 26 battalions, 40 squadrons, 12 batteries and one pontoon train per side, rulers and dividers for measuring marching and firing distances, a rule book of six chapters and the inevitable pair of dice.

*Kriegsspiell*developed almost a religious following among the Prussian high command and included Helmuth von Moltke as a devotee. In 1877, Prussian Captain Naumann published as Regiments Kriegsspiel which added even more detailed TmultipliersU to calculate various effects of fire from different unit formations.

Like all religions, a schism was inevitable. About this time Colonel Jules von Verdy du Vernois, in a backlash to the numerous difficulties that beginners run against in handling tables, calculating losses, and the like, proposed a simplified *kriegsspiel* that employed an all powerful umpire, or 'gamesmaster', that would decide the results of hostile contact. Henceforth *kriegsspiel* would be divided into the free and rigid synods. Until the advent of computers, most wargames as practiced by military colleges and as staff exercises fell into the free Kriegsspiel category.

In 1913, the legendary H.G. Wells, author of *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds* and *Things to Come* published his *Little Wars*, a rule book for wargames played with miniatures. Wells attempted to take the middle ground between the free and rigid proponents, arguing that combat results should be determined by actual toy cannon fire. Though *Little Wars* would never catch on with professional soldiers - crawling about on their hands and knees firing miniature cannons was quite undignified - it was the watershed event for introducing wargames to the public at large. ❑

Next month: computers enter the fray.

This article was first published in the newsletter *Le Guerrier*, published by Intergalatic development and edited by Ezra Sidran. Subscriptions are availbale free of charge from:

Inergalactic Development, 1427 Washington Street, Davenport, IO 52804

Ezra Sidran was also the designer/programmer of the following games: UMS and UMS II. His latest game, Jack the Ripper, will be published by Intergalatic Development next month.

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Dusk of the Gods

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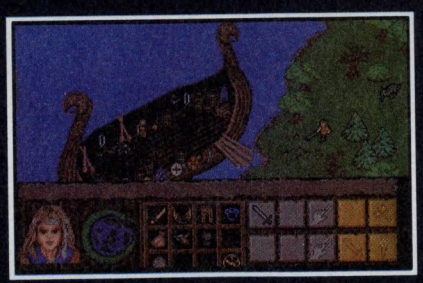

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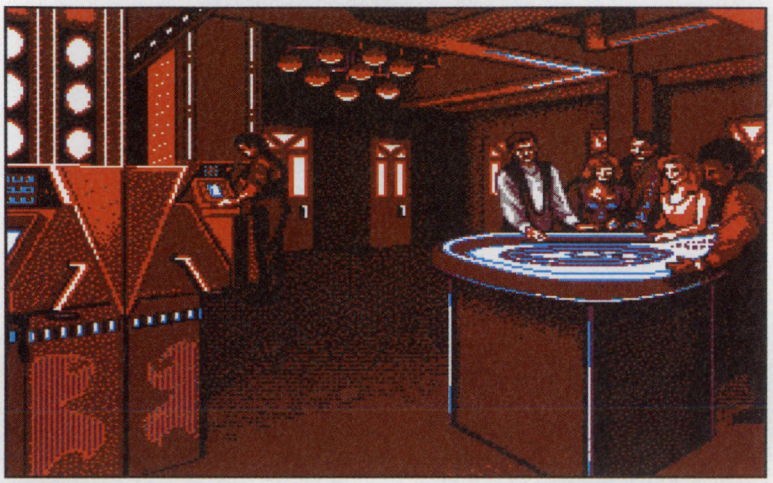
Gateway

A Virtual Venus

By Greg Ellsworth



Designed by
Mike Verdu, Michael Lindner, Glen Dahlgren Duane Beck, Bob Bates

Published by
Legend Entertainment Systems

Systems
IBM PC

PC Graphics
VGA, SVGA, EGA, CGA, MCGA, TGA

Supports
Sound Blaster, AdLib, Roland MT-32, RealSound

Writers seldom get to see their works brought to life on the screen, science fiction authors probably less than others. Many times I've put down one of Asimov's *Foundation* books or one of Zelzany's *Amber* series and wished someone would bring the story to the big screen, but all the time knowing that film studios would probably never take the risk.

I was happy when I learned that Frederick Pohl had been involved in the development of **Gateway** from his book of the same name; the manual includes a letter from him expressing his thoughts on the game. Using an original plot and characters, it stays true to the concept behind the book. Regardless of how this game ends it doesn't detract from the previous stories nor those that may yet be written in this setting.

Golden gateway

The player becomes a Gateway prospector after winning a lottery, the prize is a one-way ticket to the Heechee parking lot orbiting the Sun between Mercury and Venus. This includes 10 days life support on the station and a class in Heechee ship handling. The player also has that long to try and discover something worthwhile out there.

Prospecting entails volunteering to ride a ship whose navigation system is a mystery, and entering an unknown course to a possibly dangerous destination. Most prospectors return empty-handed, some don't return at all, but a very few lucky ones find a Heechee artifact and receive millions of dollars from The Corporation.

Canned music

The plot gets more involved once the player finds an ancient recording device which partly explains what happened to the Heechee. The object of the game becomes not just to get rich, but to save humanity from total annihilation at the hands of a race known only as the Assassins. In the endgame the player must find a way to escape a hellish virtual reality, where even dying isn't a way out.

The story and the puzzles may seem to be standard fare for an adventure game, but they are set against a background of graphics and music that make **Gateway** an interesting experience. Full screen animated artwork sequences are used to show the action in several places, including scenes of the Heechee ship in space. A continuously running 'wall-to-wall' music score changes to fit the scene, from the bar and casino on Gateway station to a serene pond on a faraway planet. There are sound effects to be heard when appropriate, but as someone who listens to his Soundblaster with headphones on I was disappointed to discover that both the music and effects couldn't both come through the sound card.

Going down easy

The game interface and display will be familiar to those who have played Legend's **Spellcasting** or **Timequest** adventures. For the player who really wants to shed the frills, the game can even be played in a text only mode. The puzzles in **Gateway** seemed not nearly as difficult as previous Legend games, and one of the designers (Bob Bates) admitted they concentrated more on atmosphere and story than on making a 'ball buster' problem solving game. In this they succeeded, although I was rather disturbed when I found that they included a hint book in the game. I resisted the temptation to look at it, but I'm sure it will shorten the play time and possibly lessen the pleasure for the player with less willpower.

I suppose the best way I can describe the difficulty of the game is to call it a kind of 'Spellcasting Lite'. For someone looking for weeks of game play and puzzle solving it may seem a disappointment, but for a entertaining story it hits the spot. Legend seems to be trying to draw more people into the market for text adventures, hoping that **Gateway** will be a good entry level game for the beginner who might be intimidated by games like **Timequest**.

I'm pleased to see that Legend is taking some risks by deviating from what worked so well before, instead of sticking only with a proven formula. I hope their next effort will combine the aesthetic innovations in **Gateway**, the pure problem solving fun of **Timequest**, and the humor of the **Spellcasting** series into one great text/graphics adventure. ❑

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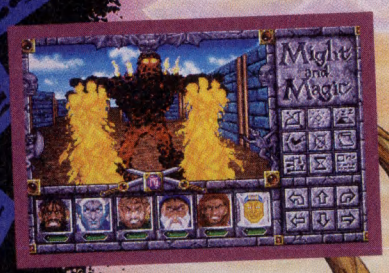

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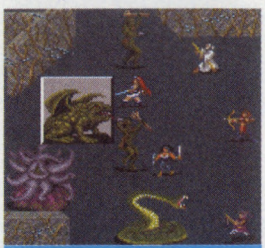
Dark Queen of Krynn

In the dungeons of the deep

By Joan McKeown



Produced and designed by
George MacDonald and Herb Perez

Published by
SSI (US)
US Gold (UK)

Systems
IBM, PC, Amiga

Supports
EGA, TGA, VGA/MCGA (256 color) Adlib, Sound Blaster and Roland

Okay, call me fickle. Call me anything at all, as long as it is in time for the next SSI Gold Box release! The latest in this series is **The Dark Queen of Krynn** which was programmed by MicroMagic Inc, with the system design coming from the SSI Special Projects Group. This team has come up with some new twists on what could have been just one more merry-go-round in Krynn.

A whale of a time

Until last month, my favorite gold box game had been **Champions of Krynn**. The marvelous humor and NPC interactions in **Treasures of the Savage Frontier** won my heart, but only until I walked in on a family quarrel in **The Dark Queen of Krynn**. Here is a land peopled by loads of quarrelsome monsters and grumpy NPCs. Even the sea monsters have personalities.

Ah, yes...the Sea Monsters. `**Queen**' has an underwater sequence that is simply terrific. The walls are kelp and algae, and monsters leap from coral and anemone beds. Humongous Sea Snakes writhe out of the depths in poisonous formations. The party sloshes around in the water, slowed by the pressure, and only certain spells and weapons will work.

The dolphin truth

Fire-breathing is out, steam-breathing and acid-spitting monsters are in. Undersea Gardens are tastefully dispersed among the pressurized dwellings, and portholes allow distorted, fisheye views of other rooms and other corridors, tantalizing the adventurers with visions of rooms that can be seen but not entered...yet. At the conclusion of the underwater sequence, the party imagines that it has discovered the truth about Dolphins.

One of the new features of **The Dark Queen of Krynn** is a pre-drawn set of combat icons that replaces the mix and match selections available in the other games of the series. I miss the ability to tailor each character to my imagination, but the available images are cute and clearly distinguishable from one another. Compared to the stylized character representations in other gold box games, the **Queen** icons are very highly detailed and colorful. They are race and class specific, and the colors of the Mage moons can be matched for easy spell selection in combat.

The indelible hulk

The art work in **The Dark Queen of Krynn** is fantastic...in both concept and execution. Old monsters such as Dragons and Umber Hulks are hypnotizingly beautiful in 256 VGA displays, and some new monsters such as the Greater Otyugh and the Enchanted Sivak Draconians are fearsomely gorgeous and grotesque.

Spells are lavish in their execution and affects, especially the area spells like Fireball. When a sound card is enabled, a Fireball begins as an engine stoked with steaming coal, and progresses through the whooshing sound of an acetylene torch growing in intensity until the steamy explosion of fire on flesh sizzles across the screen.

A solid strategy is a prerequisite for success in combat. One of the great pleasures of this game lies in the sheer variety of strategies required, and in the many ways available to skin a monster or two...or twenty. One of the great frustrations lies in the numerous set battles with hordes of nasties. Even in novice mode the number of opponents seems overwhelming, but once a strategy has been developed each horde becomes *hors d'oeuvres* for the advance to the next level.

Dark Queen of Kyrnn is a huge game, and mapping is essential. The familiar and helpful area view is available on the menu, but in a week of play I only found one place where it worked. I am real tired of the message 'not here', and of mapping, but not tired enough to pass up on the beauty and excitement of **Dark Queen of Krynn**. ❑

BRING IT HOME!

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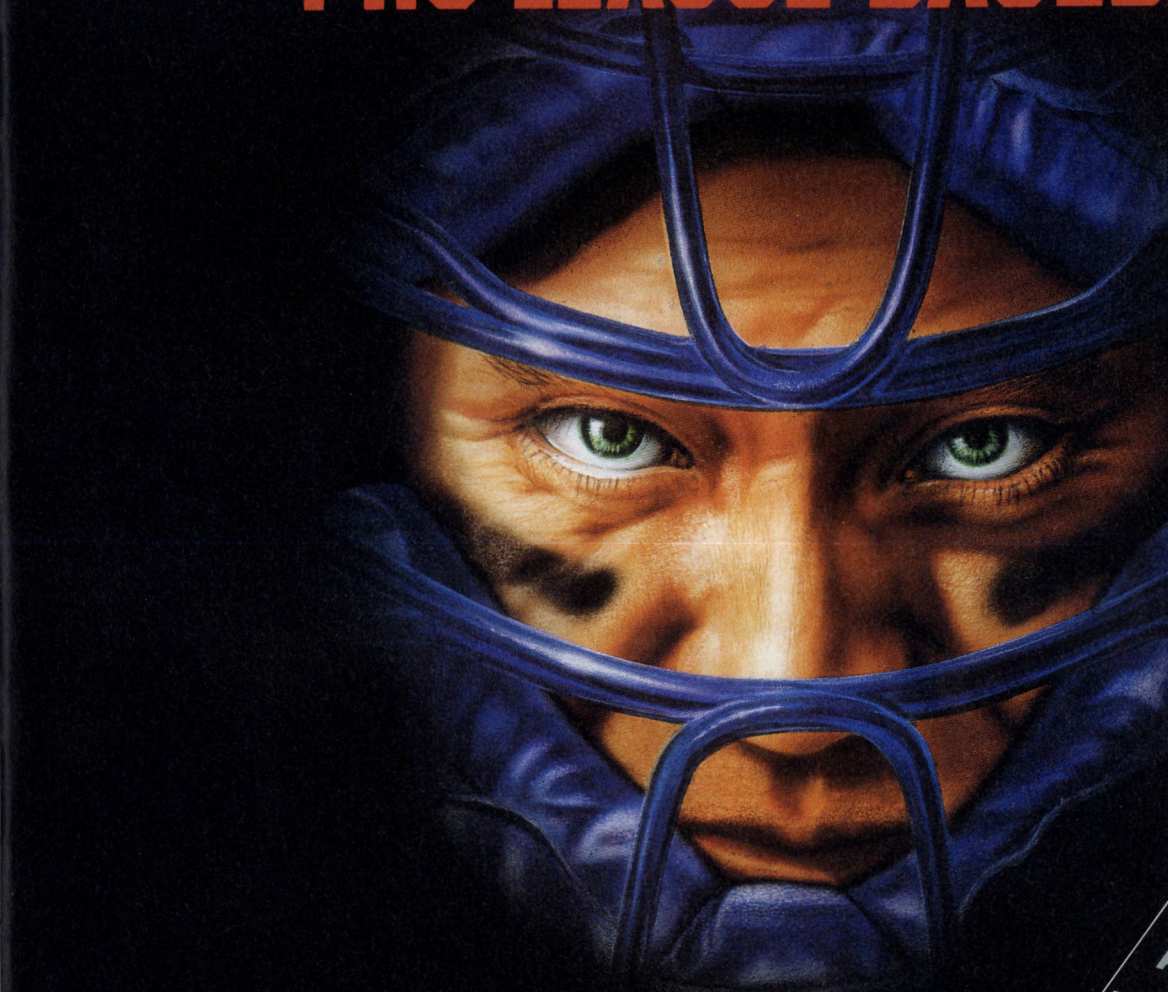

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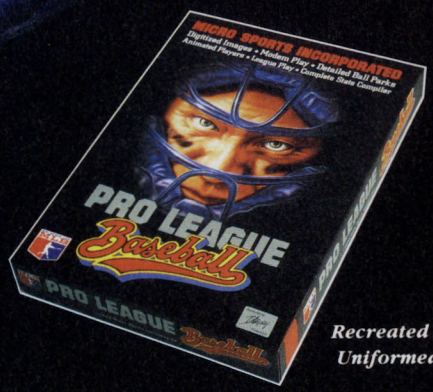

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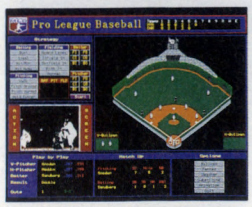

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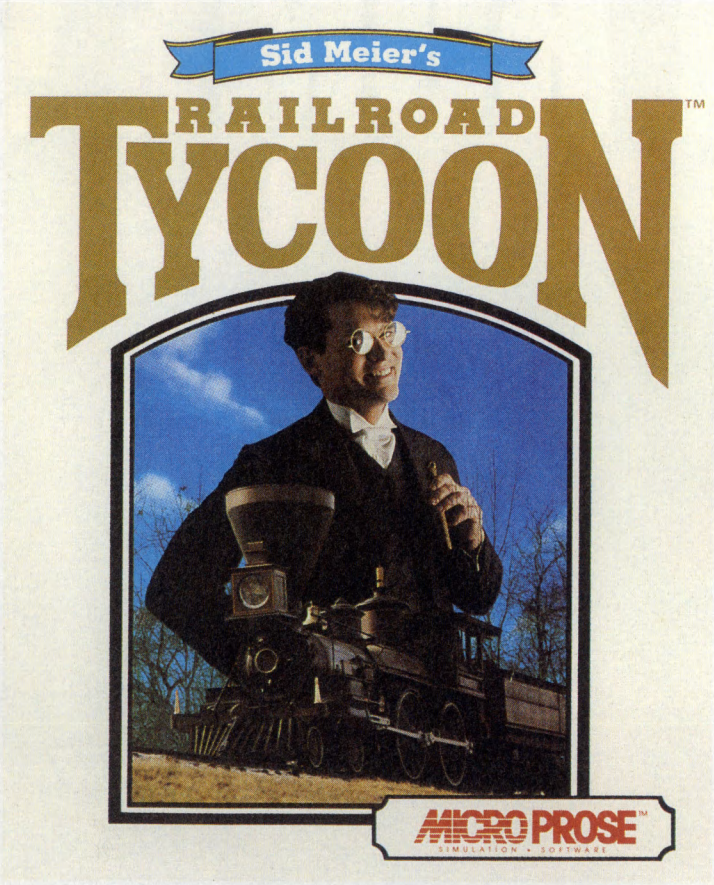

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BLOCK BUSTERS

Origin's Underworld: The Stygian Abyss

Level 4

Give Rawstag a red gem to gain access to a nearby shrine. Also to be found in the shrine is the Writ of Lorne. Dorna has some interesting ideas about how to initiate a new knight. To pass his test offer to die, drink the cup, and admit fear. Also, be sure to return after completing each subsequent quest he assigns as well as killing Rodrick.The rewards are well worth collecting. Give Derek the Gem Cutter of Coulnes, and he will reveal the means to gain the Ring of Humility in return.

Trisch can describe the thief who took the Taper of Sacrifice.The guilty party sounds suspiciously like Zak, the knight on the third level. A return visit to trade for the Taper is in order. The room with two levers and two buttons has two solutions. First, set the left lever at NW and the right lever at N. Push the top button twice.This provides stepping stones to allow a leap to the eastern wall. A well placed leap along the southern border of the platform will take the player through an illusionary wall into a corridor beyond. After leaving this secret passage, use the wand to reset the room. Now, set both levers to NW and push the top button twice.This allows a new set of steps to a ledge in the NE corner of the room.

Give Sethar the troll some delicious rotworm stew in exchange for some dragon scales.These will be needed on level 5. The door controlled by the silver and gold levers will only open if the levers are flipped in the following combination: silver, gold, gold, silver, silver, gold. The golden plate that Dorna desires is on the other side of this door.

The following rune stones can all be found on this level: An, Corp, Grav, In, Jux, Mani, Quas, Sanct.

Level 5

The Ring of Humility is in the northwest corner. Flip down the four levers in this order: NW, SE, NE, SW. Judy is looking for her lost love Tom. Remember where she is, it will be necessary to return to her later. Give Marrowsuck the ghoul, the dragon scales from Sethar the troll, and the strong thread from the spider's lair on level 1. He will make a fine pair of dragon boots with these items for just one food. The dragon boots allow one to walk on lava without suffering damage.

Kneenibble the ghoul likes to talk about his career before he died. For ten fish he will give the combination to activate the mine dispatch chamber. Shanklick has some interesting information covering a number of topics. One tidbit of particular interest is the location of the tombs. Eyesnack the ghoul is quite a musician. If properly coaxed, he will teach the notes to Mardin's Song of Wonder. Playing this tune in the right location on level 3 will reveal the Cup of Wonder.

The haft of the Sword of Caliburn is in the tombs area. The haft should be taken along with the blade to Shak so the sword can be repaired. Also found in the northmost area of the tombs is the tomb of Garamon. His grave is currently empty, but will become an important location in due time.

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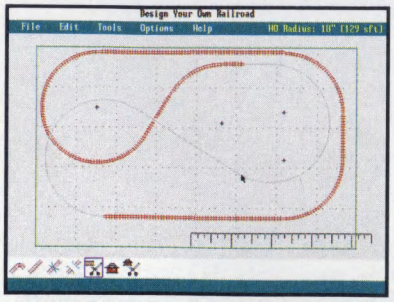

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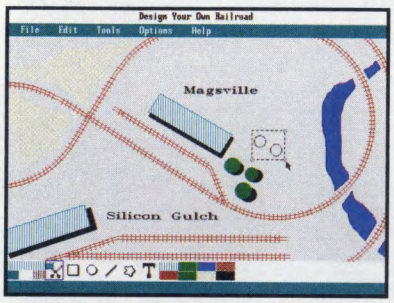

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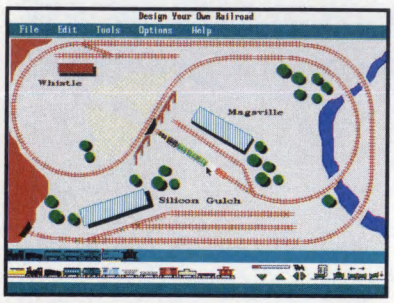

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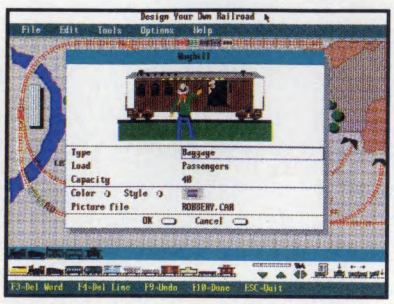

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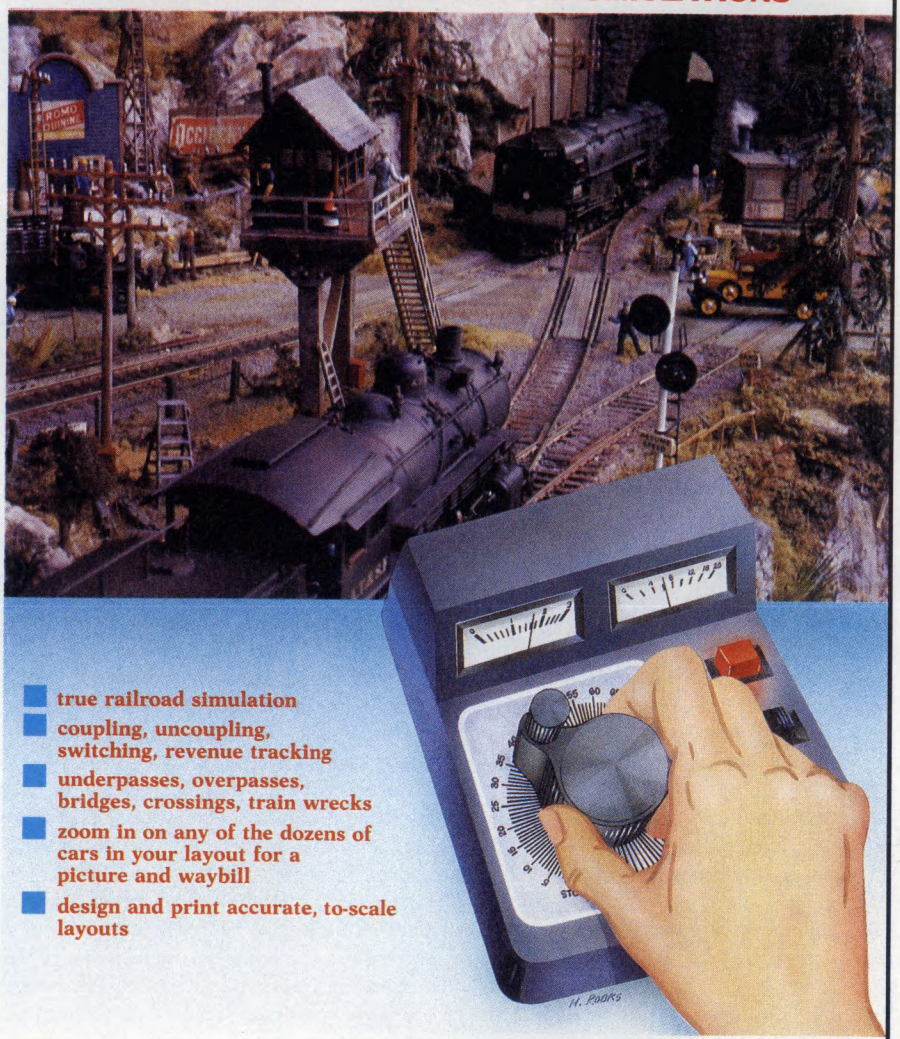

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Reader Service No. 89

The following rune stones can all be found on this level: Grav, Jux, Nox, Rel, Tym.

Level 6

Gralwart knows how to obtain a Vas stone. The location he describes is east of the entry stairs to the level. Upon entering the room run between the two banners (eyes). The rest of his directions should be self-explanatory. The Talking Door will teach the Sheet Lightning spell but, don't expect him to be happy about it.

Dr. Owl will tell anyone who rescued Murgo on level 3,the whereabouts of the Wine of Compassion. Morlock will test the honesty of the one who delivers Bronus' book. Tell the truth to get a clue to the whereabouts of the Book of Honesty. The hourglass he refers to is a room with a secret door. A leap is required to claim the prize. Challenge the golem to combat and gain the Shield of Valor.

The following rune stones can all be found on this level: Ex, Flam, Kal, Nox, Ort, Vas.

Level 7

Finishing the seventh level requires a fair amount of bouncing back and forth to the eighth level. Three stairways down lead to small areas of level 8 containing items needed to complete level 7. Be extremely careful to look for secret doors here.There are many, and most of them lead to areas that are crucial to completing the quest.

Avoid guardposts until a medallion of passage has been gained. One is in caverns east and south of the entrance stairs.

Stairs from level 8 lead to a room guarded by an imp.Take the one crown that does not have a red gem in the center. This Crown of Navigation will show a path through Tyball's maze. Follow the golden path it reveals to find Tyball's lair. The only way to destroy the orb draining all magic from this level, is to 'use' a sample of crystal from the mine on the eighth level.Tyball is holding two keys. One of them unlocks the doors to three prison cells. Be sure to sleep at some point after killing Tyball to gain information pertinent to the final stage of the quest.

Level 8

Carasso can give some directions to find Garamon's bones. He is located far to the north of the main entry stairs. The Chamber of Virtue is located in the center of this level. It can only be unlocked using the three part key.

The following rune stones can be found on this level: In, Sanct, Tym, Vas.

Endgame

After killing Tyball, go and see the three remaining prisoners. Each gives the means to gain one of the three parts of the key that will unlock the Chamber of Virtue. Take the picture of Tom to Judy on the fifth level to gain the Key of Love. Using the key from Smonden leads to the Key of Courage. Gurstang's friend Illomo on the sixth level advises looking in the library to find a book with 'Folanae' in the title. Once the book is found go to a shrine and chant the second word of the book's title to gain the Key of Truth. Place the three keys on top of each other to form the three part key.

Bury Garamon's bones in his tomb on level 5. Answer 'talismans" and 'volcano' to his questions. The eight talismans are: Taper of Sacrifice, Standard of Honor, Sword of Caliburn, Ring of Humility, Wine of Compassion, Book of Honesty, Shield of Valor, Cup of Wonder. Go to the Chamber of Virtue and throw the eight talismans into the volcano. After being drawn through the gate run along the green path and through the green moongate. Once through the gate sit back and enjoy the endgame animation sequence! ❑

Joseph Boone

Dark Queen of Krynn

Look for additional tips in the future on the game but in the meantime these will help get the party through the first major sections of the game.

One bug has been reported and fixed. A book is missing from its assigned location in Trandamere's kitchen, unless Davik has been found and leads the party. A fix for this bug is

available from SSI, and patch files are available on both Compuserve and America On Line (UK readers should contact US Gold).

I found that the pre-rolled party is excellent, but can be improved by removing the Qualinesti Elf Fighter/Red Mage and replacing him with a Half-elf Fighter/Red Mage. This particular elf was getting killed a lot and could not be revived. I also found that the game is much more fun if the party is jazzed up to maximum capabilities before beginning the adventure.

The game begins in Palanthas, where the party should visit the General who will send them to Caergoth for information.This is where

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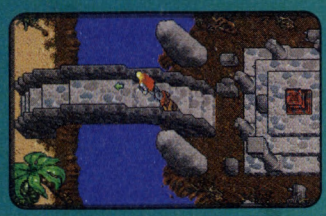

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the real adventure begins...at the easternmost docks. Tell the sailors what is happening and accept their offer.

The ship will take the party to a Draconian Cave. Captain Daenor is dedicated to a quest to find his sister, Crysia. She will lead the party and the Captain on a nasty chase through the caverns, and lure the party into many huge battles. Save the game often, and husband available magic spells; resting places are rare in the cave, but fortunately, one of the rest areas is right outside the door of the room where the beholders await the party. Face the door of the Beholder room, and then back up against the wall opposite the entrance and the party is safe.

Naudis

As in any **AD&D** scenario, the Beholders are magic resistant and truly deadly if they get a chance to cast spells at individuals in the party. Invisibility, sneak attacks and the patented Beholder Two-Step work well here. The exit from the cave is in the NE corner of the maze, and just as the party reaches the exit, Crysia is seen mounting a dragon and fleeing the area. Follow them out of the cave and return to the ship.

Next stop, Naulidis. Well, the next stop is really the bottom of the sea after a shipwreck, but the rescue is delightful and the party awakens in Naulidis where they receive the ability to move and live underwater. Fire spells and ranged weapons are useless in Naulidis. The Sea Elves that inhabit the city are fighting for survival and the party should do everything possible to assist the elves. Successful completion of all tasks assigned by the elves is important.

There are two Safe Halls in Naulidis, and there is a training center in the northern hall, at the center of the western wall. Journal entry 64 is a map of Naulidis. One major task requires the party to rescue the Captain who lies ill in the Princes's chamber. When tasks are successfully completed, Prince Lyzian will send the party to Celanost to rescue some dragon eggs, and will supply the gang with a shell that can be used once to permit water breathers to survive in air and once to permit air breathers to survive in water. The keyword here is once. If the shell is used anywhere except in the shaft between the water and the air it will disappear and this segment of the game is kaput.

Celanost

In Celanost, look through the portholes on the east wall to see the chambers that lead to the shaft. Use the shell in the shaft, and be circumspect about the pathways taken to the eggs. Don't pick any fights until the eggs are safely in the inventory. The eggs are hidden at the bottom of a well in the NW corner of Celanost. Each party member can dive for one or two of them, and success yields experience points for individuals. Save and dive is a good approach here.

On the return journey to Naulidis, the party will meet the bereaved egg owners. Be kind. Great honor and joy will greet the party upon its return to Naulidis and the prince will suggest a rest before proceeding. One last great battle which foils an assassination attempt is needed, and then the party can continue the journey.

From Naulidis, the party will be delivered to Hizdin, where it becomes time to fish or cut bait. Honesty with the bait monger will get the party where it wants to go, and success in clearing the town will prepare the party for battles to come.

Luminari Lighthouse

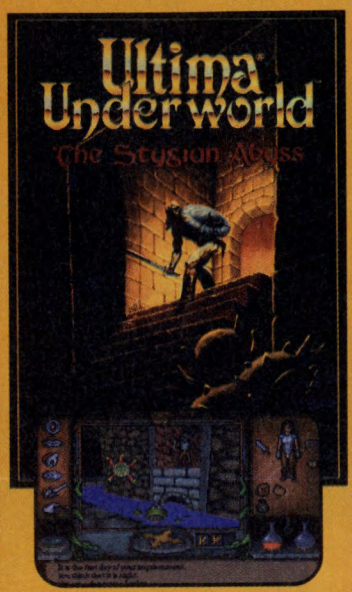
Just up the island from Hizden stands the Luminari Lighthouse. No sign of hospitality in the nasty greeting at the gate, but quite a fun house. Step right in and take a dive...into the pits. To exit from the basement, the party must climb out over the pile of debris. This is a player's choice area. There are two ways to successfully complete the lighthouse. One is to climb the tower, map every floor and gain lots of goodies and experience points. The other is to find the hidden teleport to level 11, which is behind an illusionary wall on the ground floor.

Whichever path is chosen, the party will confront the Wizard and acquire some keys. The golden key is the one that is being sought, but the rusty one will be needed later for a treasure. Note that all pits lead to the basement.

In order to be more successful in the Lighthouse, it pays to explore overland and get some more experience. This is clearly not the way the game was designed to be played, but fortunately the player is not locked into an absolutely linear progression. Just be sure to take notes... ❑

Joan McKeown

As close as you can get to virtual reality on a PC!



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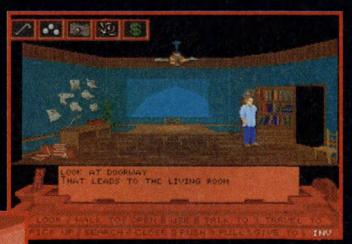

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FUTURE SHOCKS!

Stuart Mitchell at the Game Developer's Conference San Jose, California April 25-28, 1992

I had the privilege of attending the Computer Game Developer's Conference (CGDC) for the first time this year. The conference boasted of a wide array of seminars, round tables, demonstrations, and discussions all centering on development of games for the computer. One twist to this was the increased recognition accorded videogame machines as a viable platform for computer game development. More on this later, though.

The conference could be thought of as having three parts: presentations and formal discussions, vendor demonstrations, and general networking. This last may seem trivial, but it is a vital part of the conference, and fascinating news is spread through the informal network. This article will look at three key areas of development that were hot topics at the conference. If developers are talking about it here, one can be sure it will show up in commercial software soon.

'Edutainment'

Educational software was a big topic of discussion at the conference. Attendees were interested in educational software for a variety of reasons. Some simply wanted to penetrate a potentially lucrative market. Others saw educational software as being more 'worthy' or 'valid', while yet more enjoyed learning and wanted to find a way to combine the fascination of game playing with the (potential) joy of learning.

This last group of people have coined a new term for their brand of educational software: Edutainment. Now lest one scoff at this admittedly clumsy term, let me hasten to point out that several wonderful games are already out that fall into this category. Probably the most successful is **Sim City**. Will Wright took part in a seminar discussing edutainment, and he clearly saw a place for this type of software.

Broderbund showed off their Living Books series with **Grandma and Me**, a Mac CD-ROM product that has received a very warm reception. **Grandma and Me** is an interactive storybook in the tradition of **Manhole** and **Cosmic Osmo**. The player clicks on various places and is rewarded with animation, digitized sound, and music. The game is extremely charming and clearly a winner for young children.

No general direction was stated for edutainment. No formal definition was proposed. All that was stated with certainty was that edutainment was clearly the right direction to go. Standard drill-based education software is boring and ineffective. Sophisticated games like **Sim City** are compelling and capable of teaching deep lessons about sophisticated subjects. And they're fun, which is probably the most important characteristic of all.

Virtual reality

I have been reading about virtual reality for over a year now with increasing anticipation and not a little bit of skepticism. The CGDC gave me my first taste of virtual reality and it was truly amazing. Brenda Laurel and her company, Telepresence, reserved a large room for use in demonstrating a virtual reality system. The setup was fairly typical for low-end virtual reality. A helmet is worn that has a binocular video display and a pair of headphones. To my surprise, the gear fitted well over my glasses. The demonstration lasted for five minutes and consisted of simply navigating around a large space using a modified joystick in conjunction with the headgear. As I moved my head, I shifted directions. Moving up and down had the same effect. If I wanted to move forward, I clicked and held on the joystick and was propelled forward in whatever direction I was looking. This was disconcerting at times, as any shift in view resulted in a change of direction in movement.

The demo took place in a fairly simple room that contained various polygon objects which emitted sounds. In one corner a speaker played music; in another, a saxophone played a tune. As I navigated around the room, the origin of the sounds shifted in a very realistic fashion. I could travel vertically as well as horizontally, and as I moved over the top of the vertically placed speaker, the volume and clarity of the sound clearly changed.

The virtual room presented a visual boundary, but not an actual one. I flew out of the room for a while and noted that the internal sounds muted dramatically as soon as I left the room. Unfortunately, the complexity of the room was not reflected in its surroundings, and I quickly returned.

Game designers take their work pretty seriously

Another virtual reality vendor had a simple tank simulation set up in another room. I challenged Lori Cole, designer of the Quest for Glory series, to a match. We quickly destroyed the various dummy tanks before coming to grips with each other. In the end, I dispatched her tank just as she was preparing to finish mine. The game was fun, though a bit disquieting. I believe virtual reality has much greater potential than simply enhancing vehicle simulations. The Telepresence demo may not have been a game, but their use of the technology was more imaginative.

Designers and traditional game vendors were buzzing about virtual reality during the whole conference. Brenda Laurel's lecture on virtual reality hit on a variety of topics. She pointed out the fears, sometimes justified, of non-technical people. The fears revolve around control - who creates the reality? For those familiar with the writings of Philip K Dick, this is a particularly frightening thought. Brenda feels those concerns are valid, but that we have faced the same issues with every new medium. She believes that we must exhaust our current meta-

phors and models before we can truly achieve a breakthrough with virtual reality as a medium.

Multimedia

Multimedia was also a major topic of discussion, with considerable confusion over what exactly multimedia is. Some confused CD-ROM technology (a delivery medium) with multimedia. The confusion is warranted to the extent that CD-ROM is the first medium both cheap enough and large enough to use in delivering multimedia to the consumer.

Electronic Art's Stewart Bonn presented a projection of sales for various CD-ROM platforms over the next three years. He noted that these figures were certainly open to question and represented only a best guess. Nonetheless, the predictions showed PC-based CD-ROM, Super Nintendo CD, Sega CD, and Macintosh CD in a four-way horse race. His predictions gave few sales to CD-I from Philips, and he wasn't even willing to project CD-TV.

Broderbund's John Baker discussed the Living Books phenomena (**Grandma and Me**, as described in the Edutainment section) and his surprise at how successful a 'non-game' game had been. Sierra's Bill Davis opined that the 'mass market' may be more attracted to this level of interactivity than to that found in traditional entertainment software. All the vendors voiced their concerns over the murky definition of multimedia. They were also concerned about their target platforms. Few vendors wished to support multiple platforms, but at this time, none could definitively predict which platform for multimedia would emerge on top.

Recognized games

The conference and attendees recognized that 16-bit video game platforms were the equivalent of computers in many ways. The upcoming introduction of CD-ROM drives for the Sega Genesis and the Super Nintendo further emphasized the point. This year's conference was still dominated by traditional computer software developers, but that may well change in future years.

Miscellaneous items

There was some discussion of upcoming products, though the conference wasn't focused on specific products per se. Maxis showed off **Sim Life**, which resembled **Sim Earth**, though it was more focused than that earlier effort. Roger Keating described the War Room feature of **Carriers at War** which has delayed that product several months. War Room lets players create their own AI rules for a scenario and exchange them, thereby eliminating the predictability found in most strategy games. Steve Fawkner wouldn't discuss **Warlords II** in detail except to say that it would allow multiple maps. Other companies were still recovering from the Christmas rush and weren't discussing the projects on the slate for this Christmas. ❑

PGA Tour Golf for Windows

Dedicated follower of fashion

By Brian Walker

Despite the plethora of golf games on the market, there are only three that the discriminating player would consider: **Links**, **Jack Nicklaus**, and **PGA Tour Golf**. The rest could be buried in a sandpit and no one would notice, or care. Both **Links** and **Jack Nicklaus** have undergone refits (see reviews last issue) and now it is the turn of '**PGA**'. Quite aside from seeing how the new incarnation will compete with its rivals, one of the interesting things about **PGA** is that it is the first golf game (and indeed one of the first 'serious' games) for Microsoft Windows.

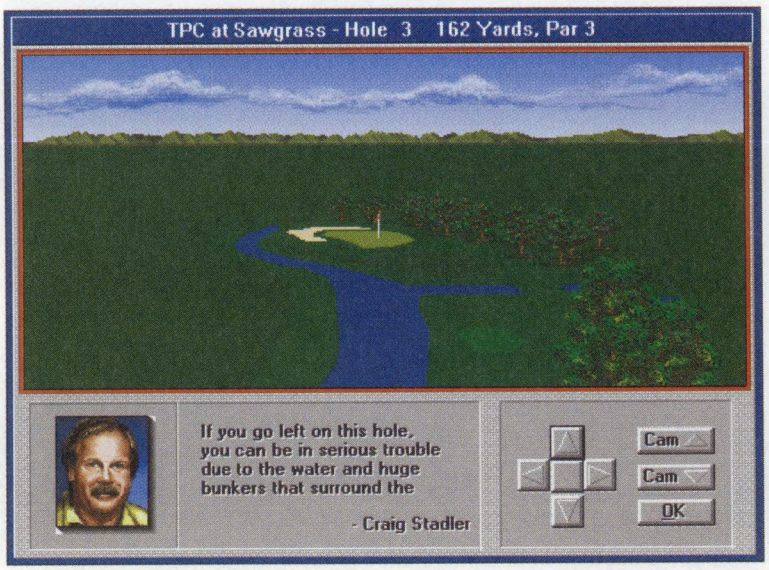
Pane in the grass

As befits a Windows compatible program **PGA** installs easily enough. After running the **PGA** program manager I maximised the window, only to find that the playing screen was but a small pane in the main frame. It could be moved in the normal manner of a Windows program, but could not be resized. The approximate playing area is thus reduced to something like 10" x 8". As someone who has just splashed out on a 17" flat screen monitor and who expects to be able to use it to full capacity, I was gobsmacked.

Pressing on, the fine resolution that super VGA provides offered some consolation for this early blow. This was particularly recognizable as the courses that come with the program are those that arrive with the low resolution DOS version: Sawgrass, Avenel, PGA West, and Sterling Shores. Despite the improved resolution, however, there is the same lack of detail about the courses that marred the original.

Snap shot

Other than the fact that **PGA** now offers the novelty of running under Windows and thereby streamlining the selection process, new features are at a premium. The most useful new option is the 'hole browser' which lets players conduct a sort of yard-by-yard flyby of the hole. This is achieved via a 'camera' facility in frame-by-frame mode. Sound, including the digitized variety, has also been added. Screens, such as the top-down view and the green grid will pop up automatically, or can be switched off via a menu. I'd recommend the latter as an unwelcome new feature is slowness. The DOS version of **PGA** really moved along on this machine (a 386/40), but Windows puts the brakes on it.


TPC at Sawgrass - Hole 3 162 Yards, Par 3
If you go left on this hole, you can be in serious trouble due to the water and huge bunkers that surround the
- Craig Stadler
Cam
Cam
OK

See prompt

The gameplay, which was undoubtedly the strongest point of **PGA**, remains intact as one would expect for this is pretty much a straight DOS-Windows port. This certainly respects the integrity of the original but I can't help feeling that an opportunity has been lost here. **PGA** (DOS) is an excellent but not a perfect game. The stats database needs revamping as does some of the course detail. It seems that what Electronic Arts are trying to do here is to capture the fashionable new Windows market, rather than persuade users with the DOS version to switch over. There is certainly no inherent advantage in playing this program under Windows. It is slower, and fails to take advantage of the more useful features such as offering users a bigger say in configuring the screen displays. Indeed, other than the main playing screen there are no screens to configure. Ironically it is the new DOS based **Links 386 Pro**, with its choice of forty different screen set-ups, which offers a better windowing system.

For the record, prior to the sudden surge of refits, my favorite golf games were as follows:

1) **PGA Tour Golf**
2) **Links**
3) **Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf**

PGA has now been superseded by **Links 386 Pro** at the top of my big three, and there's still **Microsoft Golf** to come. I'll still keep playing **PGA**, but I have a feeling that it will be from c:\ ❑

Programmed and Designed by
Mike Curry

Published by
Electronic Arts

Systems
IBM PC 's with Microsoft Windows

Supports
AdLib and compatible boards and the Roland MT-32. Digitised sounds only through the Soundblaster and Pro Audio Spectrum boards. Mouse and keyboard.

Players
1-4

Notes
Minimum of 2 meg of RAM required to run this program. A 386/20 (minimum) PC is highly recommended.

Grand Prix Unlimited

On the beaten track

By Steven Wartofsky

Designed by
Tom Loughry

Published by
Accolade

Systems
IBM, PC, (hard disk required and a minimum 386/16 configuaration is strongly recommended)

PC Graphics
VGA, MCGA

Supports
Adlib, Soound Blaster, Roland, PC Speaker, Joystick, Mouse, Keyboard

Grand Prix Unlimited is *almost* a great Formula One simulation. Much thought has been given not only to the layout of menus and screens, but also to the arrangement of choices and abilities to save those choices both during and prior to a race. Five different Formula One cars (Ferrari, Tyrell, McLaren-Honda, Williams-Renault and Benetton-Ford) are provided, sixteen meticulously designed real-world Formula One courses, options to configure important aspects of performance for each car raced, and a very intuitive and easy to use course architecture system.

Off to a tee

Let's take a moment before rushing into the pits to check out the Architect, one of the most important innovations in the system. The **Grand Prix Unlimited** Architect is much like the system Accolade has provided for its **Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf** games, albeit scaled down in some aspects and transformed for the particular purposes of Formula One course design. The player is basically working with three different essential design elements: landscaping, course layout and routing, and finally object placement (sound familiar, **JNSE** fans?).

The first logical step in design is track layout. A series of different track tiles are available -- curves, S-Turns, intersections, tunnels, etc. -- which can be carefully laid piece by piece to construct the overall course. The choice of appropriate combinations of curves, straights and intersections is entirely up to the player, thus providing enough freedom for a novice designer to quickly hang himself.

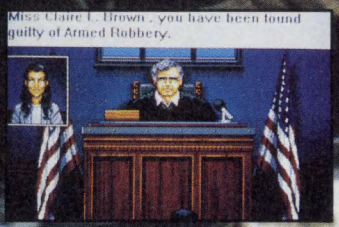
However, one of the first nifty aspects of the Architect is that, once a reasonable facsimile of a course has been created, there's an automatic option to set up routing along the track for the actual race (in other words, one can lay out an extensive grid of track and then make choices within that grid as to how the actual race course will be run, as is the case with the real thing in Formula One racing). If connections from track element to track element haven't been designed carefully enough to be driveable, the router will come to a halt and identify the point on the track where more design work needs to take place. From there it's a few easy clicks back to the Track Layout system to revise any trouble spots.

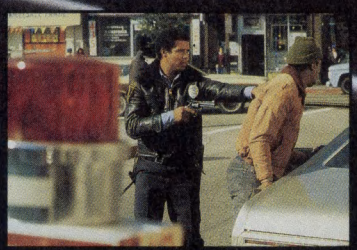
Finally, the designer can place objects along the track -- buildings, camera men (more on these later), sailboats, rivers, bridges, and so on. All objects (as well as track elements) can be rotated both prior to and after placing, to get the kind of facing the player would like.

The joy of the **Grand Prix Unlimited** Architect is very simple: for the first time on computer, Accolade has essentially provided the simulated equivalent of the ultimate model racecar set, with plenty of track and landscape available at no cost. The only

HILL STREET BLUES

THE COMPUTER GAME





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IBM VGA screens shown. Pictures of the actual TV series have been used with permission from MTM Production. Available for IBM PC/XT/AT, Tandy and 100% Compatibles with 512K and VGA/MCGA (256 colors), EGA (16 colors), Tandy (16 colors) or CGA. Supports Ad Lib and Soundblaster. Also available on AMIGA and ATARI ST. APPLE MACINTOSH version available soon. Visit your local dealer or call toll-free **1-800-783-8023**.

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limit here is that the number of objects to be chosen from are fewer than can be imagined; if **GPU** survives in the marketplace, additional objects would be a nice add-on.

The race proper puts everything together as the heart of the whole experience (racing's what it's all about, *n'est-ce pas?*). There's only a single Qualifying Lap, unlike the two days of practices and qualification laps that the real-world circuit allows. Qualifying then sets up the player's pole position, and the race begins. Opponents are wildly aggressive, and will take every opportunity on both curves and straights to pass; it's theplayer's job to keep the classic Formula One standards of courtesy high if the whole thing's not to turn quickly into heaps of automotive mayhem.

Mist again

In Practice and Single Race modes only, Weather can also be set to either Sun, Mist or Rain. The latter two options make tracks significantly slicker, increasing chances for spinouts and what can most euphemistically be called a severely understeered turn on a tight corner (i e wrap a yellow Renault round an old an old oak tree).

In any of the racing modes prior to actual race, the player can change six different aspects of the car's performance: View, Brakes, Radius-Steering, Wings, Tires and Gears. Although all these options seem relatively simplistic, with sliders choosing from among an average of six different settings for each aspect, they offer an adequate enough variety in the performance to be useful. The gear ratio editing is in particular a fresh option, and is a significant factor in configuring any car to run well against the pack on a particular track. I've managed to set up a McLaren-Honda to run more sluggishly both in acceleration and cornering than a Ferrari, and vice versa. The effects on performance of each option are quite noticeable and appropriate.

Screech!

Actual racing works best with the joystick (the mouse or keyboard can be used for all other aspects of navigating around the screens); and here's where the whole wonderful thing risks coming to a screeching halt. To control, say, an optimized McLaren-Honda at Monaco with the difficulty level set to Pro, is going to take some time. Control of the cars at the most 'realistic' levels is quite touchy and difficult, and getting the hang of cornering efficiently takes much practice and patience.

Skid marks

The first tangible weakness in the design is that there doesn't seem to be a setting somewhere between Incredibly Challenging and Sunday Picnic Driver.

Another more significant design problem is that when skidding on corners or heading temporarily off the track (yep, these Formula One babies can be run briefly as four-wheel drive vehicles, though not without damage), accessing the Sound Blaster (or even PC Speaker) causes what looks like stop-frame animation; frame rate, which is usually extremely fluid, drops to 2-3 frames per second until the skid is over or the car's back on the track. Conversation with Accolade's Customer Service discovered no workaround of (or knowledge of) this problem, and it's a serious one.

Related to this, sound effects are at best dismal; surely Accolade has decent samples of a Formula One racing engine by now? Neither Sound Blaster nor Roland sound options provide any improvement in this area.

The worst limitation of **GPU**, though, has to be the overall lack of performance information, both in the simulation and in the manual. Granted, Accolade has been telling me for years that they're after fun rather than deep simulation; but the lack of info on the different cars' real-world performance characteristics, absence of any discussion of the various included tracks, no information either in-simulation or in the manual about tire and engine heat and wear (when tires get worn the car starts bouncing on the road, a nice effect but tantamount to an idiot light for something that a Formula One driver should be able to monitor much more closely), all detract mightily from thinking of **GPU** as anything but an arcade-ish racing game. As such, it's great fun, but it's nothing like the serious simulation current PC hardware could run. ❑

BACK ISSUES

COMPUTER GAMES STRATEGY PLUS

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TIMELY PREVIEWS
CUTTING EDGE DESIGN NOTES
DETAILED GAMING HINTS
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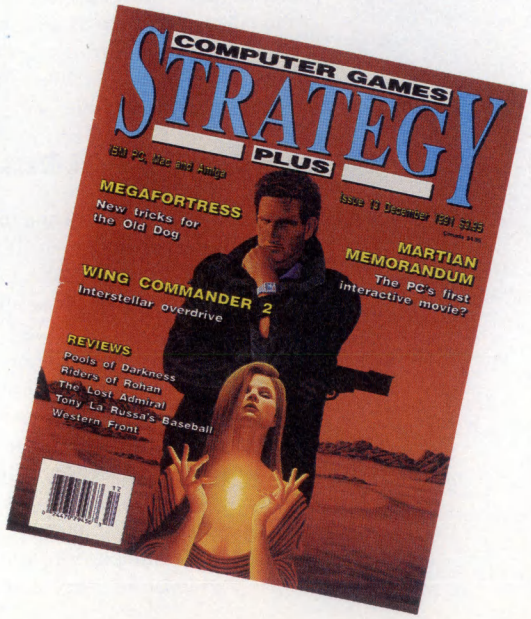
15	Police Quest 3, Lost Admiral, Mike Ditka Football,Sim Ant Team Yankee 2, Aces of the Pacific and more.
14	Civilization, Leisure Suit Larry 5, Might and Magic 3 No Greater Glory, Rules of Engagement and more.
13	Martian Memorandum, Perfect General, Megafortress Armada 2525, Riders of Rohan and more.
12	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat, Megatraveller 2, Timequest A-10 Tank Killer, Martian Dreams and more.
11	Warlords, Castles, Martian Dreams, RBI 2, Robosport UMS 2 Planet Editor, Secret Weapons and more.
10	Wing Commander, Martian Dreams, Third Reich, Summer CES report, Armour Geddon, Timequest and more.



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MicroLeague Baseball 4

Diamonds are forever

By Joseph McCullough

Designed By
Jim Nangano, Ed Daniels, Skip Haughay

Published By
MicroLeague Sports

Systems
IBM PC

Graphics
256-color VGA

Supports
AdLib, SoundBlaster, digitized sounds, printers

Players
1-2

Notes
Supports auto-download of up-to-date stats from USA Today's BBS service

Depending on who is talking, MicroLeague Sports has been either on the cutting edge or tail end of sports game design with their line of manage-only baseball simulations. They released **MicroLeague Baseball: The Manager's Challenge** months before any of the other publishers came to bat with 'third generation' baseball simulations, but the game, despite its nuts and bolts improvements, was laden with second-generation graphics and sound. With the release of **MicroLeague Baseball 4** (**MLB4**), which they are touting as 'fourth-generation,' the same question arises: Is **MLB4** reactive or proactive? The answer: it is a little of both.

Sound that bites

With the exception of the umpire sounding like a mutated gorilla when he shouts 'Play Ball!,' the game's sound and graphics are on par with the competition. We're talking 256-color VGA here, as well as the best-sounding crack of the bat found in any baseball sim. The sampled sound-bites are a far cry from the complete play-by-play found in **Hardball III**, but they do add texture to game play.

Pushing the envelope a bit is the addition of full-motion video windows which pop-up during the game. The video is rendered in shades of grey, and gets a bit repetitive after a while, but MicroLeague gets high marks for breaking new ground.

There is nothing new about the game's interface, for better or for worse. On the plus side, anyone familiar with earlier incarnations of **MicroLeague Baseball** will feel comfortable with **MLB4**. The player can still make all choices with either the mouse or the keyboard, and can invoke a stats notebook during normal play.

Other commands, however, are still not intuitive. One must rely on the supplied crib sheet to remember how to view the box score, go to the bullpen, or even pick a play. Having not played **The Manager's Challenge** for some time, it took a while for me to remember all of these arcane commands.

The jewel in the crown

Once the interface has been mastered, the player with find **MLB4** both a joy and challenge to play. The obligatory exhibition and league play choices are present, as well as a the best league and schedule editor on the market. Not only is there a choice of which teams to include in the league, but also a choice as to the number of divisions within the league. The schedule editor is equally flexible. There is even a way to schedule double-headers into a custom league schedule.

The jewel in MicroLeague's crown has always been their excellent player editors, and **MLB4** improves on earlier versions by adding an expanded 30-man roster and righty and lefty breakdowns for both pitchers and batters. The game also supports manager profile editing, plus, instead of relying on default logic, the manager profile editor allows the player a chance to create and load a manager file that more closely mirrors what would perhaps be called during key game situations.

If previous versions of **MicroLeague Baseball** had a crippling weakness, it was the paucity of plays. This has changed in **MLB4** and makes the game much more enjoyable. Now the player can design up to 99 custom plays with the playbook editor. The default playbook has a few useful plays, but not enough to cover every game situation. The editor fills in these gaps nicely. It even supports printing, as do all of the other editors included in the game.

The generation gap

To top off this fine game (and to up the ante for all subsequent baseball simulations), MicroLeague has entered into an agreement with *USA Today*'s SportsCenter service to provide up-to-the-minute stats for downloading into the game. Now the player can truly track the current season as it evolves, and attempt to take his favorite team to the World Series.

The question remains, is **MLB4** a 'fourth-generation' baseball simulation? If one defines generation as an update to an existing product, then **MLB4** is definitely 'fourth-generation,' if only in name. Others might argue this definition, and offer that a change in generations can only occur if the new game makes significant technological leaps. **MLB4** makes a strong case here as well. It adds exciting new features to an already solid game — the link to *USA Today*, full-motion video, and a playbook editor come to mind. MicroLeague has set the stage for the next round of baseball releases and upgrades. It will be fun to watch how the other publishers respond. ❑

The Sports Locker will return next month.

PGA Tour Golf for Windows

Dedicated follower of fashion

By Brian Walker

Despite the plethora of golf games on the market, there are only three that the discriminating player would consider: **Links**, **Jack Nicklaus**, and **PGA Tour Golf**. The rest could be buried in a sandpit and no one would notice, or care. Both **Links** and **Jack Nicklaus** have undergone refits (see reviews last issue) and now it is the turn of '**PGA**'. Quite aside from seeing how the new incarnation will compete with its rivals, one of the interesting things about **PGA** is that it is the first golf game (and indeed one of the first 'serious' games) for Microsoft Windows.

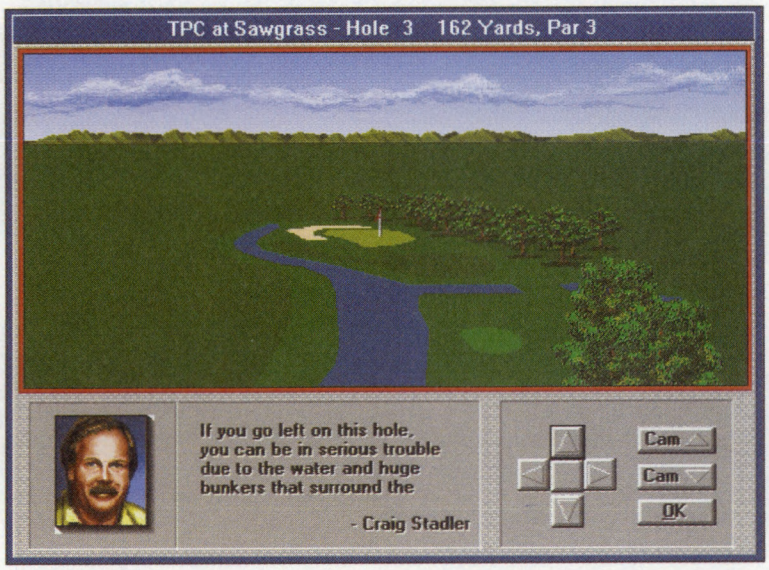
Pane in the grass

As befits a Windows compatible program **PGA** installs easily enough. After running the **PGA** program manager I maximised the window, only to find that the playing screen was but a small pane in the main frame. It could be moved in the normal manner of a Windows program, but could not be resized. The approximate playing area is thus reduced to something like 10" x 8". As someone who has just splashed out on a 17" flat screen monitor and who expects to be able to use it to full capacity, I was gobsmacked.

Pressing on, the fine resolution that super VGA provides offered some consolation for this early blow. This was particularly recognizable as the courses that come with the program are those that arrive with the low resolution DOS version: Sawgrass, Avenel, PGA West, and Sterling Shores. Despite the improved resolution, however, there is the same lack of detail about the courses that marred the original.

Snap shot

Other than the fact that **PGA** now offers the novelty of running under Windows and thereby streamlining the selection process, new features are at a premium. The most useful new option is the 'hole browser' which lets players conduct a sort of yard-by-yard fly-by of the hole. This is achieved via a 'camera' facility in frame-by-frame mode. Sound, including the digitized variety, has also been added. Screens, such as the top-down view and the green grid will pop up automatically, or can be switched off via a menu. I'd recommend the latter as an unwelcome new feature is slowness. The DOS version of **PGA** really moved along on this machine (a 386/40), but Windows puts the brakes on it.


TPC at Sawgrass - Hole 3 162 Yards, Par 3
If you go left on this hole, you can be in serious trouble due to the water and huge bunkers that surround the
- Craig Stadler
Cam
Cam
OK

See prompt

The gameplay, which was undoubtedly the strongest point of **PGA**, remains intact as one would expect for this is pretty much a straight DOS-Windows port. This certainly respects the integrity of the original but I can't help feeling that an opportunity has been lost here. **PGA** (DOS) is an excellent but not a perfect game. The stats database needs revamping as does some of the course detail. It seems that what Electronic Arts are trying to do here is to capture the fashionable new Windows market, rather than persuade users with the DOS version to switch over. There is certainly no inherent advantage in playing this program under Windows. It is slower, and fails to take advantage of the more useful features such as offering users a bigger say in configuring the screen displays. Indeed, other than the main playing screen there are no screens to configure. Ironically it is the new DOS based **Links 386 Pro**, with its choice of forty different screen set-ups, which offers a better windowing system.

For the record, prior to the sudden surge of refits, my favorite golf games were as follows:

1) **PGA Tour Golf**
2) **Links**
3) **Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf**

PGA has now been superseded by **Links 386 Pro** at the top of my big three, and there's still **Microsoft Golf** to come. I'll still keep playing **PGA**, but I have a feeling that it will be from c:\ ❑

Programmed and Designed by
Mike Curry

Published by
Electronic Arts

Systems
IBM PC 's with Microsoft Windows

Supports
AdLib and compatible boards and the Roland MT-32. Digitised sounds only through the Soundblaster and Pro Audio Spectrum boards. Mouse and keyboard.

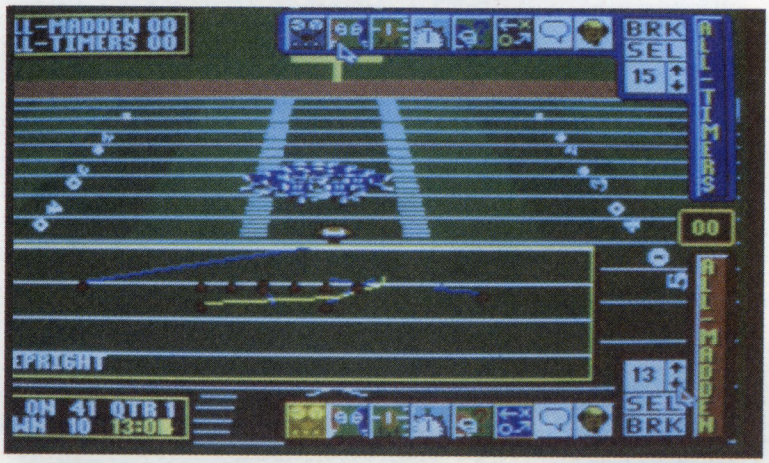
Players
1-4

Notes
Minimum of 2 meg of RAM required to run this program. A 386/20 (minimum) PC is highly recommended.

John Madden Football 2

Play acting

By Richard Lawrence



Designed by
Robin Antonick and John Madden

Published by
Electronics Arts
Systems
IBM PC

Graphics
VGA

Supports
VGA, EGA, Adlib, Covox, Roland, Tandy support, Mouse, Keyboard, Joystick

Players
1-2

Notes
Hard drive required

John Madden Football 2 (henceforth **MFB2**) carries the name of one of the great coaches of the game, and it therefore seems fitting that this new release in the crowded field of football simulations is one of the best coaching games available to date.

The pre-release version of **MFB2** provided for review installed easily enough, but had to be coaxed via command line parameters to recognize a SoundBlaster card for audio - which was promptly turned off, as the sounds provided contribute little and are of AM radio quality. Graphics are acceptable (standard VGA) but not exciting; view is from behind the ball and elevated, zooms in slightly during the play itself, and cannot be changed.

Taking a dive

Several choices are provided from the Play menu. The Quick Game is a dive-in, learn the type of environment, with abbreviated playbooks and preselected teams. A Standard Game allows full playbooks, including those designed by the player, and the ability to play any combination of teams, which can also be custom designed. **MFB2** comes with 1990 pro season teams, and a variety of special teams that imitate great teams of the past, although none of the names of the players is correct. Guessing the proper names of the All Madden team from nicknames supplied can be an interesting distraction. The final option is Practice, which allows the player to match any play combination and run it any number of times to try different options.

Getting the sack

Actual play is wonderfully uncomplicated, considering the wide variety of options **MFB2** supplies. All selections during play calling are by icons and dialog boxes, so a mouse is highly recommended. There are several self explanatory icons: instant replay, play selection, time out, and snap the ball. Special icons are available, such as the Madden icon, which brings advice from the coach himself on play selection. The most important, however, is the head-to-head comparison icon, which allows the player to view the strength and weaknesses of individual players versus the opponents personnel, just as real coaches do. This allows intelligent decision making for the play calling.

Execution of the play itself can often be aggravating and may be better left to the computer, which will execute any play automatically if no user input is sensed.

The player first controls the quarterback, who then passes, or hands off as called for by the play selection. Passing is simplistic; a push of the button calls up a cursor which is then placed over the receiver. Said cursor is hard to position with either the joystick or the keyboard, but the mouse is responsive. Unfortunately **MFB2** often leaves much less time than the real NFL to pass, which leads to frequent sacks of the quarterback by the computer. This is not one of the strong points of the game, especially in light of the fact that the human player has no control whatsoever during defensive plays.

One of the exceedingly favorable points, however, is the play design facility. **MFB2** really shines here with an intuitive interface that mimics actual chalkboard design, but with the added abilities of instantly viewing relative player strengths, the execution of the play, and the modification thereof.

Tasks can be assigned individually or in groups, allowing the player to quickly create basic blocking schemes but also providing flexibility for total custom plays. Routes are drawn directly on the chalkboard, and a list of special assignments is available for key players. Abbreviations and terminology used are consistent with real coaching sessions, furthering the standing of **MFB2** as a coaching game. Illegal plays can be designed, but the manual does a decent job of warning against obvious rules violations (ie blocker down field as a receiver).

Heal thy self

Custom team design is available but fairly rudimentary. Players are rated on generic skills such as durability and coverage reading, rather than factual statistics, on a scale of 0-9. During games, players can be injured and even removed for several games duration, but the player editor provides a 'heal' command for when that player is needed back quickly.

In short, Madden is not flashy, has little arcade appeal, but is realistic within its limitations and is a real treat in its approach to the simulation, favoring the player as coach rather than a joystick thrasher or statistical mathematician. ❑

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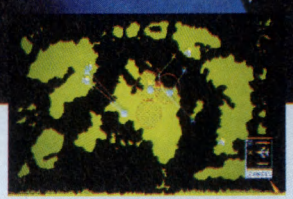

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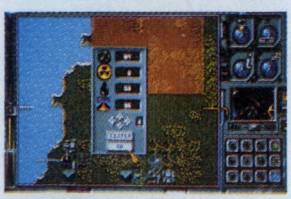

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*VGA screen shots

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COMMANDER CRUNCH REPORTS FROM THE HANGAR

Crunch goes Japan bashing

Maybe ultimately I have the attention of a flea, but life's too short to keep doing the same thing over and over again for very long, especially if one has any choice in the matter. It must be frightening to software designers to realize there are people like me out there, who crave perpetual radical innovation and are ready to go daft on them should anything even remotely resembling what's gone before appear on the scene (I know, there are many more cartridge game fans who are just the opposite, but they're all busy playing **Zelda XIX**)

This makes it tough on people like Dynamix, who are busy developing and evolving a flight simulation engine that began life as **A-10 Tank Killer**, found new love as **Red Baron**, and is now starting a big family with **Aces of the Pacific**. Given the potential for an audience that's eager to see great leaps and bounds in flight simulation design, realism, depth, breadth, width, height, etc, the old engine's gonna have to heave and puff a little as it gets stretched and bent into new shapes and forms.

Heaving and puffing

Some of the huffing and puffing begins immediately with **Aces of the Pacific**. Now, let me say right up front, this is likely over time to be one of my favorite flight simulations. There's an incredible amount of variety built into the thing, none of it replicating what came before, either in terms of flight performance, mission and campaign structure, or flight group/flight section communications. But, as those of you with some logged time on **AOTP** must already know, there are a bunch of teensy, gnat-like bugettes in the thing that can prove a mite annoying over time. The rudder drift of the plane to the right when giving 'er up ailerons, the lack of adverse yaw when using rudders without ailerons, the ability to defeat the differences in historical performance of certain matchups, and so on. Dynamix will no doubt take care of most of these as things progress, but this kind of picnic-blanket irritation is an unfortunate first for the company's line of flight simulations.

Sanity limits

Enough buzzing and whining, though, and on to some introductory discussion of flight tactics pertinent to **AOTP**. Let me say out front that if you've never tried going whole hog for a Thrustmaster combination Flight Control System and Weapons Control System along with Maxx Pedals, here's one sim to test the limits of your sanity on; **AOTP** makes full effort to support the entire combination of realistic input controls currently available for PCs, and it definitely makes a difference in the way the whole thing feels.

Even with a lowly CH Flightstick and, say, a CH Mach III joystick, though (these recommendations based entirely on personal purchase, rather than yearly funding from CH Products), operating with dual joysticks is a massive improvement over jerking just one around. With this combination, the Mach III can be set up to function as both throttle in one axis, and rudders in the other.

Clunk click

What does this do for a dogfight? Previously, due in part to the clunkiness of having to reach for the keyboard, my tendency was to leave throttle at a constant, use rudder only for slight corrections in heading (totally unrealistic but simple), and rely on a single joystick to operate elevators and ailerons to wave the plane around in the sky. With dual joysticks, however, it's now possible to simultaneously initiate a climb and throttle back for

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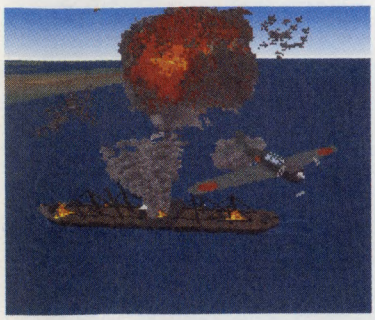


extremely rapid loss of forward airspeed, an incredibly useful defensive maneuver in **AOTP** for the Japanese planes in particular (such a maneuver tends to generate an overshoot on the part of the opponent). Or, alternately, it becomes very easy to do a hard right bank with extreme left rudder, producing a horizontal sliding motion that makes it very difficult for the guy in the plane behind to take accurate aim. Combinations of right ailerons with different amounts of right rudder allow for a radically more precise turning fight, which is crucial in **AOTP** as the window of opportunity for getting in a good shot is realistically small.

Putting all of this together, my favorite maneuver in a close-in dogfight in this simulation is to get up high speed and energy in an F4F, come shooting up behind a Zero, throttle back radically to match speeds and then let go with very short bursts of fire (ammunition is, for once, realistically limited, making precision aiming and firing a persistent challenge no matter how skilled the player). If the AI running the Zero's better than Novice, I can expect to complement that maneuver with a subsequent rolling dive or climb, in an attempt to follow the opponent from a comparatively low-energy starting point.

Radical radius

The F4F in contest with an A6M is basically an energy fighter (whereas, to reverse the equation, the A6M vs. the F4F is an angles fighter). What this means is that for the F4F (at least theoretically speaking -- in the current version of **AOTP** it's easy to defeat the difference in turning radius between the two planes by using maximum rudder on the F4F during a turning fight), working the vertical plane of maneuver is paramount. Dives and climbs, initiated with careful conservation of the plane's overall energy situation in relation to the opponent, are both the offensive and defensive maneuvers of choice. Historically (I believe the manual spells this out nicely), the F4F could outrun an A6M when on defense simply by diving and thus trading altitude for forward motion well beyond the A6M's performance envelope.

Alternately, the Zero's a perky little demon in the horizontal plane of maneuver. In other words, it can out-turn an F4F. It can use its more radical turning radius to make changes in the horizontal relations between planes much more quickly than the F4F can follow.

Twister

As Shaw's *Fighter Combat* points out, it's a heckuva lot more interesting and professional to do something other than 'here we go 'round the mulberry bush' when in a turning fight, especially in a Zero. Rather than trying to get behind the F4F's six and stay there, it's more useful to attempt to break in such a way as to make a series of head-on passes at the opponent, in clockwise/counter-clockwise fashion. This can be combined, in an offensive maneuver, with some climb during approach to the turning fight to give the plane extra energy to maneuver with. It's certainly possible to go in circles in **AOTP**, just as it is with many flight sims; but the variations in flight performance allow for testing out a wider range of real-world air combat maneuvers as well. Go for what's interesting, rather than for what's the easiest way to exploit the program's limitations. Remember that a tighter turning radius is achievable with something less than maximum airspeed, within limits of course.

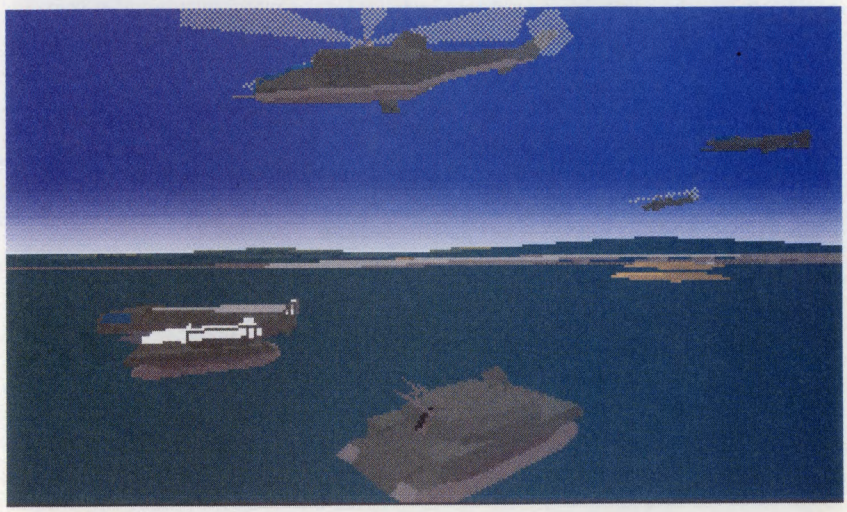
Well, so what else is up on the flight simulation front? Not up yet, but under construction in their carefully guarded hangar, is Digital Integration's forthcoming (upcoming? imminent?) **Tornado**. All that's been seen is a series of pretty screen shots, but the graphics detailing looks quite good at least (lots of ground objects, nice city representations, interesting groupings of combined arms opponents, etc.), and Digital Integration did okay at least once before with **F-16 Combat Pilot,** one of the more realistic air combat simulations at the time it was released. If they can hack out flight and weapons performance anywhere near as detailed as in the latter sim, and combine it with the graphics present in the screenshots, they could have something intriguing on their hands.

Blarney stoned

I'm in this all for the fun, but let's close with a serious plea that air combat simulation designers everywhere continue to press for greater realism in their designs. Right now, this means things like providing communications with the control tower to call in air or ground support during a mission; making sure that planes (particularly historical ones) can suffer from rare but significant induced effects such as adverse yaw, spin-outs, torque-induced flip-overs, etc. and weather conditions (rain! send us rain! thunderstorms! mess up that horizon something good!).

Well, bugger all the serious blarney (whoops, sorry to get that all mixed up, I'm just an American with Mongol -- umm, make that mongrel -- heritage), time to give the ol' propeller another spin. To quote Henry David Thoreau in *Maine Woods*: 'Contact! Contact!' Hmm, how'd the rest of it go? Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la... ❑

*When Commander Crunch gets better he will be continuing his tactical talk on **Aces in the Pacific** in our next issue.*



Tornado: 'intriguing'

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT FALCON 3.0...

And weren't afraid to ask

Marisa Ong of Spectrum Holybyte supplies the second part of the answers

Interface

My keyboard is locked out. No matter what I do, none of the keyboard commands work while I am in the plane. My mouse or joystick seems to work fine.

You need an updated version of **Falcon 3.0**, which fixes this problem. In the meantime, while you are waiting to receive your update disk, you can try adding the line break=on in your config.sys file. If break=on doesn't work, you can also try adding the line devicehigh=c:\dos\ansi.sys in your config.sys file.

My mouse only moves halfway across the screen. I can't get it to move to the right-hand side of the screen.

You will need to update your mouse driver. We suggest that you contact the manufacturer of your mouse about getting the latest version of the mouse driver. If you have the Genius mouse from Kye International Corporation, you will need to contact Kye at 714/923-2417 for version 9.06 of their mouse driver. If you have a MicroSpeed trackball, you will need to contact MicroSpeed at 510/490-1403. You can also try booting without your mouse driver active by deleting the appropriate line in your autoexec.bat or config.sys file. If you have Windows, you can use the mouse.comfile that comes with Windows.

I can't control the throttle with the keyboard. Every time I press O_to start the engine, I only get to 60% before the engine spools down.

You probably have a joystick with a throttle wheel, such as the CH FlightStick or the Kraft Thunderstick. If you wish to control the throttle with the joystick's throttle wheel, just calibrate the throttle wheel correctly. Select Recalibrate from the Control menu when in the plane and follow the onscreen directions. If you do not wish to use the throttle wheel, then you can select ThrustMaster from the System Setup screen. If you have a later version of **Falcon 3.0**, you can just say 'No' to the question during joystick calibration of whether you want to use the throttle wheel.

Does the 'coolie hat' on the ThrustMaster FCS do anything?

Unfortunately, we are not yet supporting the coolie hat on the ThrustMaster joystick.

Sound

*Which sound cards does **Falcon3.0** support?*

The AdLib, Sound Blaster, and Roland sound cards. It is compatible with the AdLib Gold, Pro Audio Spectrum, Sound Blaster Pro, Thunder Board, ATI's Stereo F/X, and any other compatible sound card. In addition, **Falcon 3.0** supports the PC speaker and the combination of a Sound Blaster and Roland.

I don't have a sound card. What kind of sound effects will I get from my PC speaker?

If you have at least 2MB RAM total with 1MB EMS, you need to select PC Speaker for both the Radio Messages and the Sound and Music. You will not hear any music, but you will get all the sound effects and digitized radio messages. If you only have 1MB RAM with no EMS, then you should select PC Speaker for the Sound and Music. Select None for Radio Messages and turn Background Sound off. You will only hear basic sound effects, such as gun fires and warning buzzes, but you will not hear any background sound effects such as the engine and missile growl.

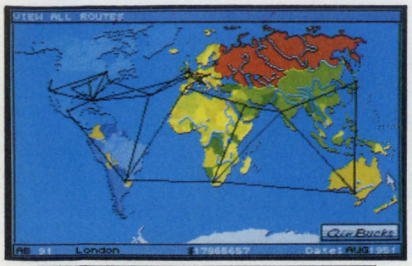
I have a sound card but only 1MB RAM total and, therefore, no expanded memory. Which sound effects am I missing?

You will not hear any of the digitized radio messages from your wingmen or AWACS unless you have expanded memory.

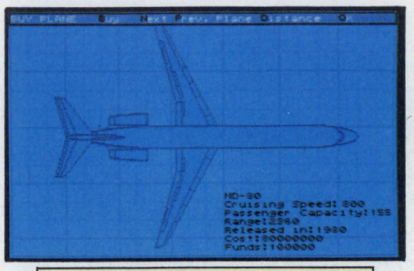
Why does the AWACS message sound distorted? I can't understand what it's saying, although the rest of the radio messages sound fine.

In earlier versions of **Falcon**, the AWACS message deliberately used radio static for the numbers (waypoint, altitude, angels) so we could use the same sound sample generically. In **Falcon 3.0** and later, we changed the AWACS message to "Waypoint" in order not to confuse more customers.

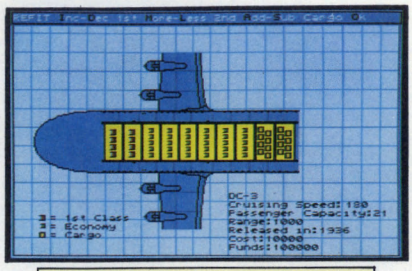
BUILD YOUR OWN AIRLINE!



- Develop your own global route network



- Buy the latest planes as new technology becomes available.



- You decide how to fit out all your planes.

Air Bucks is your chance to build an airline- it won't be easy, but if you make it the rewards are huge! Start with $100,000 and a DC3 in 1946, at the start of the air travel boom. Decide which places to fly to, where to use as a hub, when to buy new planes and which ones to buy. New planes become available over time, from a DC9 to Boeing's 747! But beware just because a plane is new does not mean it is right for you. You must also find the cash to pay for it; and planes don't come cheap! You are sure to need the help of your friendly bank sooner or later, or even to sell shares!

AIR BUCKS

- *1 to 4 players (human or computer)*
- *Sophisticated economic model.*
- *World map can change every game.*
- *Fleet size larger than you're likely to ever need!*
- *Detailed Graph Chart and reprints*
- *Hi-Resolution Graphics supported (IBM PC).*
- *Easy to use point 'n' click interface.*

- You can even set the luxury level on your fleet.

- There's money to be made in cargo as well as passenger flights.

- Will you beat your rivals to this and other targets.

YOUR RUNWAY TO SUCCESS!

Impressions

Committed to Excellence in Strategy Entertainment

Communications

*Can **Falcon 3.0** be played over a NetBIOS-compatible network?*

No, **Falcon 3.0** requires the IPX protocol. This means that it is not compatible with Lantastic, LAN Manager nor any other NetBIOS-compatible network software. **Falcon 3.0** will only run on a Novell Netware or Novell Netware Lite network.

How do you start a head-to-head game with communications?

Please refer to the Release Notes and Communications Handbook inside your package. Also be sure to select a squadron and pilot before you click on the COMMS monitor.

*Can **FALCON 3.0** be played centrally from a server in network mode?*

No, each station must have its own local copy of the game.

*Which version of ipx and net.com does **Falcon 3.0** require?*

You must have ipx version 3.10 or later, netx or emsnetx should be version 3.22 or later. Novell Netware Lite works, but all of the user names will appear as question marks.

When I try to dial with my modem, nothing happens.

Make sure you have the latest version of **Falcon 3.0** which includes a manual modem command mode where you can enter your own modem commands instead of using the default ones. After you hit the accept or save button in the Communications Setup screen, you will be asked 'Use modem defaults?' If you need to input some special modem commands or a long phone number, press _. The default modem strings will be displayed at the top of the dialog box. Enter your modem commands beneath. When you are ready to start the modem connection, press e_at a blank modem command line.

*Does **Falcon 3.0** support either com3 or com4? The Communications Setup screen only lists com1 or com2.*

Because **Falcon 3.0** uses an interrupt-driven communications protocol, we only support com1 or com2. However, you can switch to com3 or com4 if you use a utility program called PortFinder (available on CompuServe).

Red Flag

Why do I get shot by SAMs in Red Flag when I am doing one of the Air Combat School training lessons?

Because the manual suggests selecting intermediate for Air Combat School, lessons SAMs and AAA are set to reserves. This level of SAMs-AAA is definitely aggressive. You can disable SAMs and AAA by selecting none, but not all of the ground targets will be there.

When I take my squadron's pilots into Red Flag, their ability scores don't change.

You need a later version of **Falcon 3.0**, which fixes this problem.

Simulation

Why doesn't the ILS work properly? When I try to follow it in for a landing, it doesn't guide me correctly to the runway with the proper glideslope.

The beacon in **Falcon 3.0** is actually more like a directional indicator than an ILS. You can use it to find the runway, but you should land visually. The ILS beam as it is now is actually broadbeamed 360°. You should line up in a 90°, 180° or 270° heading and align the vertical bar of the ILS. Land visually instead of using the horizontal bar.

When I press _ to turn on the ILS, the view shifts downward.

In order to better see the runway while landing, we programmed in a view shift when you turn on the ILS. This is the equivalent of lowering the HUD, which happens in the real F-16 simulators.

I have a British keyboard, and when I press \, nothing happens.

Press ' instead of \ to invoke the ILS on a British keyboard.

Why does the High Fidelity flight model act strangely at 250 to 300 knots?

The High Fidelity flight model was originally programmed for the ASAT (Avionics Situational Awareness Trainer). Because the ASAT was designed to teach BVR (Beyond Visual Range) intercepts, it focused on dogfights. So slow speeds were not needed in the ASAT flight model, which are only used for taking off and landing. When we converted the flight model to use in **Falcon 3.0**, we decided to use the Complex flight model for the slower speeds. The jerkiness you see at those slow speeds is a result of the transitions from the High Fidelity flight model to the Complex one and vice versa.

When I am flying in the High Fidelity flight model, my plane keeps dropping out of the sky. If the autopilot is on, however, the plane can continue to fly.

The High Fidelity flight model has a weight limitation of 33,700 pounds. If your F-16's weight is less than this, the plane flies fine. But if your F-16 weighs 33,700 pounds or more, then the High Fidelity flight model will cause the plane to fall out of the sky. The Complex flight model, on the other hand, has a variable weight limitation somewhere between 38,000 and 40,000 pounds depending on many factors. Because the autopilot always uses the Complex flight model, it never suffers from this weight load limit. If you plan to fly using the High Fidelity flight model, be sure to keep your weight under 33,700 pounds. ❑

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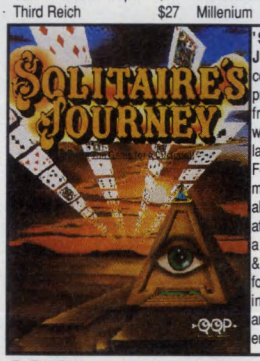

'SOLITAIRE'S JOURNEY' is a complete solitaire program. Choose from 105 of the world's most popular solitaire games. Features tournament play which allows you to create your own, keeps a complete history & overall averages for each game, 4 intriguing quests are included, & several play levels. **$36**

'OMAR SHARIF ON BRIDGE' is the first talking bridge game that uses full VGA graphics. Set up your own hands to practice slams, no trump hands, or defensive play. Features digitized speech, 1-4 players, reveal any or all hands at any time, printer control to print out hands, & novice mode for beginners. **$37**

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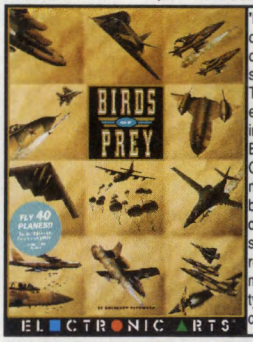

'BIRDS OF PREY' could be the most complete flight simulator ever. There are 40 different aircraft including the MIG 29, B1-B, and F117A. Choose between 12 mission types; bomb runs, troop drops, & reconnaissance. Features a real world environment with 3 terrain types, airports, & carriers. **$32**

'BRAVO ROMEO DELTA' gives you the role of Chief Target Planner at the Strategic Air Command. It is your duty to launch a limited nuclear strike against the forces of the Soviet Union in order to gain a military advantage without precipitating a full scale war. Features ability to play either side. **$34**

The **'THUNDER BOARD'** is a sound board that is 100% compatible with Soundblaster and Adlib. It reproduces digitized sounds using an 8 bit DAC. Features include dynamic filtering, 11 Voice FM music synthesizer, sampling rate up to 22 KHz, microphone input, joystick port, & 2 watt power amp. **$84**

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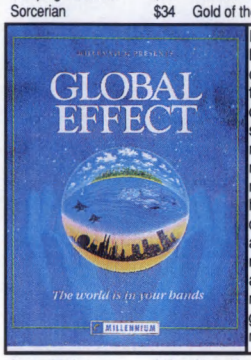
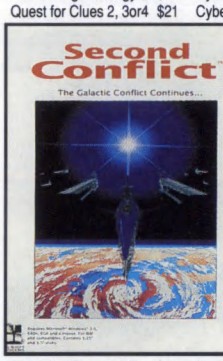
'DREADNOUGHTS' is a WWI surface fleet battle simulator. It recreates the look, specificatons, and tactics of fleet combat. Features 3D views, comprehensive manuals and sea charts, a potent English command parser, one or two player mode and computer controlled ships, gunnery and damage control. **$42**

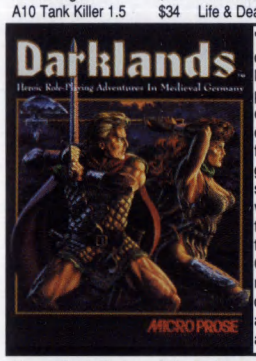


In **'GLOBAL EFFECT'** you are called upon to protect civilizations on distant planets. In save a world, you must solve environmental problem; in rule a world, you have full military options to use against your opponents; and in create a world, you must build from the ground up. Has modem play. **$32**

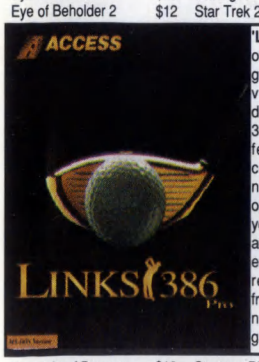
'B17 FLYING FORTRESS' is a WWII bomber simulation. Can you lead a 10 man crew to victory against squadrons of Nazi warplanes? Features authentic flight dynamics, customize your plane with historically accurate nose art, & control each crew members position from pilot to bombadier. **$39**



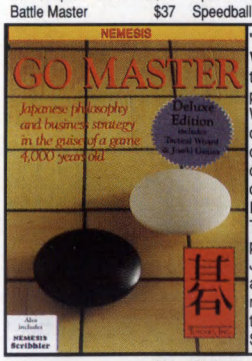
'SECOND CONFLICT' is a game of interstellar strategy and conquest. Test your skill against friends or the computer in one of 6 exciting scenarios or create your own with the built in editor. Choose between warships, stealthships, missiles, & transports in your quest to rule the galaxy. **$34**



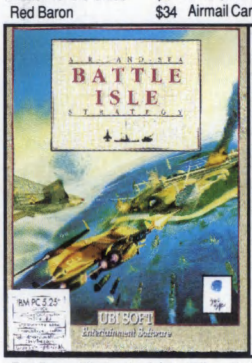
'DARKLANDS' draws upon the lore, myths & superstitions of medieval Germany to create a realistic fantasy role-playing game. A new menu system that provides more traditional rpg options than ever before. Characters fight in real time combat to develop skills that allow them to grow and develop. **$39**



'LINKS 386 PRO' offers **Super VGA** graphics and advanced features designed for your 386 or 486. New features include computer opponent, save game option that allows your friends to play against you in an existing game, pre-recorded games from worthy opponents, & many game modes. **$42**



'NEMESIS GO VER 5 DELUXE' is the ultimate computer GO program. With the simplicity of checkers and the complexity of chess, GO is a serious strategy game. Includes: GO MASTER-a basic GO player and tutor, Joseki Genius adds complex corner openings, Tactical Wizard & Scribbler. **$109**



'BATTLE ISLE' is a strategic wargame. Features 1 or 2 player modes with difficulty levels from beginner to expert. You control multi-purpose factories ground troops, airplanes, helicopters, carriers, destroyers, subs, and more. Features over 32 unique maps, & multiple zoom levels. **$32**

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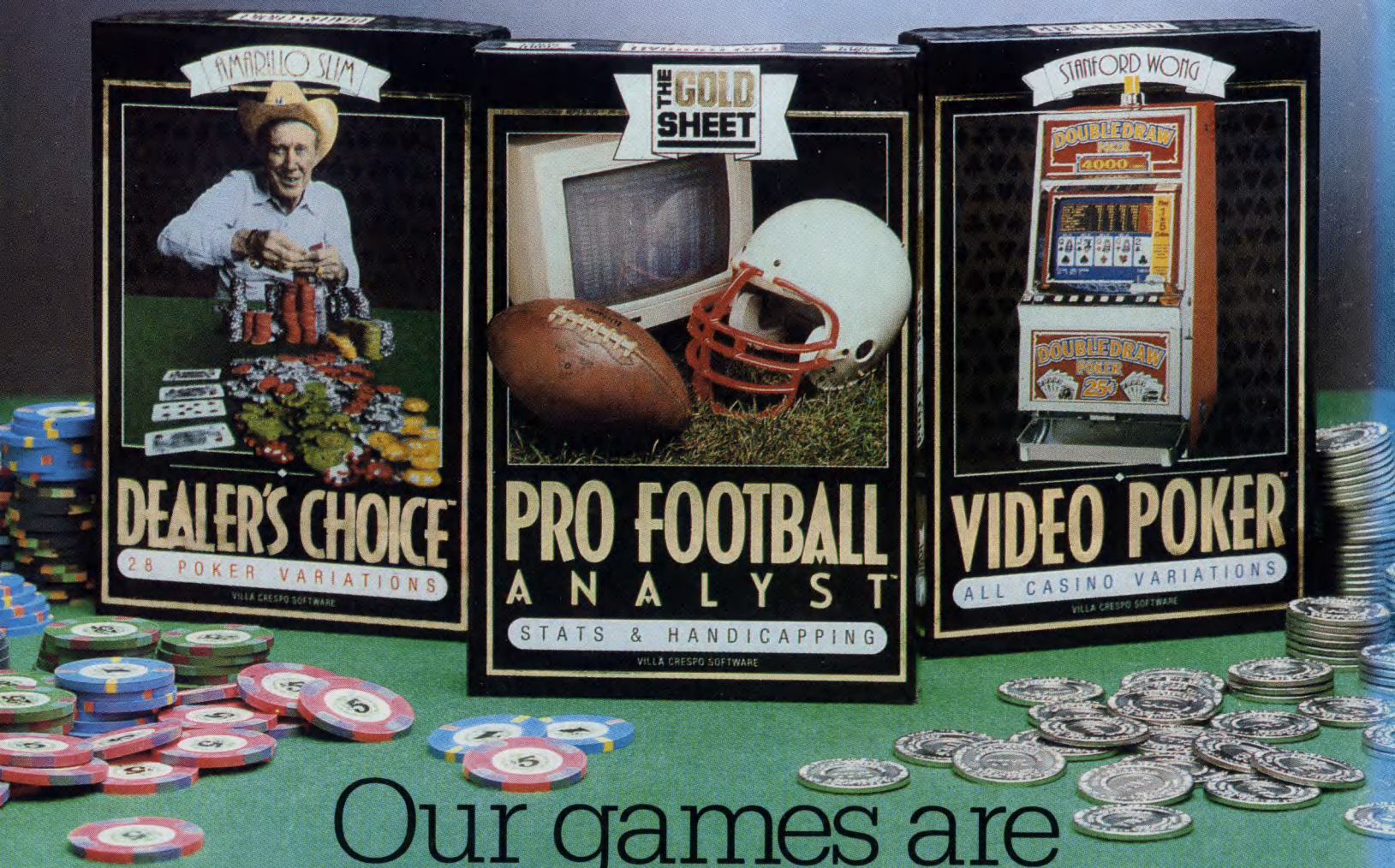

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